LETTERS
of
WERTER.

.....

From the German

Letter 71

Ludlow,
Printed at the Office of G. Nicholson (from Manchester).
Sold by T. Knott, No. 47, Lombard-street;
and Champante & Whitrow, Jewry-street, Aldgate, London.
Anno 1799.

1578/4508
(1-3)

PREFACE.

The story of WERTER should not be considered, merely as an offspring of the imagination. The author has given, as he informs us, little more than the particulars of a fact, within the circle of his own acquaintance. The son of the Abbé Jerusalem, a celebrated theologist of Brunswick, was the man, whose passion for a lady of Wetzlar was attended with consequences so fatal. Goethe always chose his subjects from scenes of real life, which judicious preference has rendered his works truly energetic and interesting.

Mr Goethe has been represented as the apologist of suicide. But this charge can have been made only by such as have not distinguished the author from the work. By this method of deduction, would not the entire body of our tragic and epic writers be affected? That the author was not conscious of any such implication, appears evident from the following short address prefixed to the original edition—"I have collected, with care, every circumstance I could discover relating to the unfortunate Werter; I now submit them to your inspection, convinced that they will prove acceptable. You cannot withhold your admiration of his genius, your pity to his disposition, or your tears for his unhappy fate. And thou, sweet soul of sensibility! whose inclinations are similar, *may this book prove thy friend*, if, by the rigour of thy destiny, or thine own imprudence, thou art deprived of a better!" The uncommon simplicity of the story, and sublimity of the diction, have been universally al-

lowed. In these respects the letters of Werter differ essentially from a novel. There is no variety of character, or of events, to raise the reader's expectation, and but one correspondent; it is Werter alone. Nature had infused a strong proportion of passion into his temper, and his feelings were too fine to support his load of distress. Let not the reader be offended, therefore, at his extravagances, but rejoice that heaven has granted him a mind less susceptible of frailty, and more prepared to encounter the evils of life.

In this edition a few passages, which appeared to lower the general extraordinary merit of the work, are omitted.

LETTERS OF WERTER.

LETTER I.

May 4, 1770.

I am glad that I left you. And yet, on reflection, I am surprised how I bore to part with one who was the companion of my early days, and is now the chosen friend of my heart; from one whose character and talents are congenial with my own. Surely the human heart is inexplicable; it seeks repose where it cannot be found. But you forgive me, I know you do. The very connections on which I had founded my hopes of happiness, appear to have been destined to prove the sources of my misery. Poor Eleonora! But am I to be blamed for the tenderness which took possession of her gentle heart, whilst I was admiring the charms of her sister? Yet I have doubts whether I am really innocent. Might I not fan her flame of affection? for you have seen me pleased, amused, and soothed with the most trifling expression of her kindness. Truly, I find many causes of reproach, and am, perhaps, ingenious in tormenting myself. Be not, however, uneasy, my dear friend, I will endeavour to subdue this wayward disposition, nor continue to augment the miseries inseparable from humanity, by looking back and dwelling on the painful remembrance of the sufferings I have endured; but will enjoy the present, and bury the past in oblivion. You are certainly in the right; that fatal disposition which makes us recal past scenes and past sorrows, greatly adds to the number of the

wretched. I am exceedingly well pleased with my situation here. Solitude, by the truly wise, has ever been courted, and in this terrestrial paradise 't is a medicine to my mind. The delight of Spring touches my heart, and gives fresh vigour to my soul. All nature rejoices and every field looks gay. Every tree, every bush is full of flowers, and a delicious perfume fills the air. The little tenants of the woods renew their matin songs, and, in the evening, Philomela sings a requiem to departing day. What a contrast between the country and the town! The city affords me no pleasure, but the finest kind of country, and the greatest natural beauties, are in its environs. Upon one of the neighbouring hills, which is a link of that chain which diversifies our landscape, the late Marquis of Mabley made a garden. It is laid out in that style of simplicity; which plainly demonstrates that the professional skill of the gardener has been corrected by the native taste of a man of feeling and genius, more attentive to his own enjoyment than to rules of art. I have given some tears to the memory of its departed possessor, upon a tomb, in an arbour that is now almost in ruins. This was the favourite retreat of his leisure hours, and which is now become mine. I hope soon to have entire possession of this spot. I have secured the gardener in my interest, and shall be careful not to lose his favour while I have the means of preserving it.

LETTER II.

May 10.

How shall I express the mental satisfaction afforded by solitude! My mind is calm and serene like

the fine mornings of spring. Solitude and tranquillity, in a country so well suited to my disposition, give me a true enjoyment of life. I find in this retirement many charming relaxations, and the pleasure of mere existence so entirely absorbs my faculties, that I neglect my talents, and forget my wonted amusements. My pencil and palet lie useless, and yet I am a greater painter than ever. Now the dense vapours of early morn conceal the verdant prospect. The mist, exhaled by the powerful heat of the sun, leaves the branches bespangled with watery gems. Thick tufted trees defend me from the meridian sun, while a few rays only chequer my favourite alcove with a glimmering light. I sometimes pensively wander under shady arches interwoven over my head. Here, extended upon the long grass near the margin of a murmuring stream, I admire the infinite variety of plants, and grow familiar with all the little insects that surround me, as they skim amongst the flowers or creep in the grass. Then I become sensible of that power which formed us, and whose eternal influence supports, and amazes us. But darkness soon closes over my sight; the system of the universe, the infinite extension of space, dwell on my mind, and absorb all its powers, like the idea of a beloved mistress. Oh that I had but powers to express these vast conceptions with the same warmth, with the same energy, that they are impressed on my soul! but the sublimity of them astonishes and overpowers me.

LETTER III.

May 12.

The most lively genius influences my senses and gives to every surrounding scene the beauties of paradise. I am attached by a sort of inchantment to a spring of pure water which gushes from the rock, in a cave, at the bottom of one of the hills; about twenty rough steps lead to it. The rustic wall which surrounds this grotto, the towering pines which overshadow it, the cool refreshing air of the place, the murmur of the water, the artless notes of the sweet inhabitants of the boughs, every thing is agreeable, interesting, striking. Not a day passes in which I do not devote an hour or two to this inchanting spot. The young girls from the town come to fetch water from it—innocent and necessary employment! formerly the occupation of kings' daughters. The remotest times present themselves to my imagination. I see our ancestors concluding treaties and making alliances by the side of fountains; and pilgrims, weary with the sultry heat of day, seated upon the margin, or laving in the transfluent stream. Whoever does not enter into these sensations, has never really enjoyed cool repose by the side of a spring, after a long summer's walk.

LETTER IV.

May 13.

I sincerely thank you for your offer; but I will have nothing to do with books: for heaven's sake don't send me any. I have been so long guided, im-

pelled, and agitated, that I wish to remain free. I only want strains to lull me, and Homer furnishes them in abundance. Often have I strove to calm the blood that seemed boiling in my veins; often have I endeavoured to stop the keen and sudden passions of my heart.—But it is not to you that I need explain the nature of my sensations. You have often seen, with concern, my sudden transitions from sorrow to intoxicating joy, and from soft melancholy to violent and dangerous passions. My heart is like a sick child; and like a sick child I let it have its way. But this between ourselves, for I know the world would blame me for suffering my passions to gain such an ascendency over my reason.

LETTER V.

May 15.

I am already become the favourite of the common people here, and particularly of the children. At first, when I took notice of them, and spoke to them, they answered me rather roughly, and thought I meant to insult them. I however persisted in my endeavours to become agreeable, and soon found the truth of an observation I had often made—that people of exalted rank are anxious to keep their inferiors at a great distance, as if they could lose their dignity by coming near them. It is a pitiful wantonness or pretence to sense, which induces any person to become familiar with an inferior, and afterwards, without cause, treat him with neglect or contempt. I know that we are not, we cannot, be all equal; but whoever intends to acquire respect by keeping people at a distance, I consider a coward who hides

himself lest he should be unable to stand before his adversary. The last time I was at the fountain, I found a young woman upon the steps, with her pail beside her, waiting till somebody came who might help to place it upon her head. 'Shall I assist you, my dear?' I said. 'Oh! no! sir,' she answered, colouring. 'Come, come, make no ceremony,' said I; and helped her to lift the pail. She thanked me, and went up the steps, smiling.

LETTER VI.

May 17.

I have made a numerous acquaintance here; but have not been able to meet with any society. I don't know what it is in me that can attract the inhabitants of this city; but they seek me, attach themselves to me, and are so earnest in their expressions of esteem, that I am hurt I cannot proceed with them in their own way, and I part from them with regret. You ask me what sort of people they are? Just such, my dear friend, as are commonly to be met with every where. Nature has produced man in the same state, but fortune has made immense differences. The majority are obliged to labour the greatest part of their time, merely to acquire a scanty subsistence; and the small portion that remains is so irksome that they use every method in their power to get rid of it. Such is the lot of man! There is, however, another class of people, in whose company I find frequent amusement, and with whom I sometimes partake of those innocent pleasures which ever afford gratification to the human mind. I cheerful meal, a neat table, where frankness and openness of heart ex-

cite hilarity; a walk, a dance, and other little amusements in their company, have the most wonderful effect on my disposition: but then it is necessary at those times, that I forget my talents, which then lie dormant, useless; and which I am obliged to conceal from them. Alas! this idea sinks my spirits! and yet, my dear friend, it is the fate of all who are like me, not to be understood. A few days since I met with Mr. V——, an accomplished young man, with a very pleasing countenance. He has lately arrived from the university of Upsala; and does not think himself a prodigy, tho' he cannot but perceive his superiority to numbers with whom he converses. He appears to be a man of greater application than genius. Having heard that I understood Greek, and could draw, (two very extraordinary things in this country) he came on purpose to see me, and displayed his whole stock of literature, from Homer to Winkelman, and from De Piles to Priestley; assured me he had read all the first part of Sultzer's Theory; and was in possession of a manuscript of De Heyne's on the Study of the Antique. I cannot help smiling while I write this: however I forgave him. I am become acquainted too with a very worthy man who is steward to the prince. His manners are marked with that frankness of heart and manly firmness which never fail to conciliate esteem. I am told that nothing is more pleasing than to see him surrounded by his family. He has nine children; and the eldest daughter is much talked of and admired. I have received a general invitation to his house, and purpose to embrace an early opportunity of paying my first visit. It is about a league and a half from hence, at a hunting lodge

which the prince gave him leave to inhabit after the loss of his wife, whom he loved extremely; and could not bear to continue in the steward's house, where she died. I have moreover met with some ridiculous people; or rather they have put themselves in my way. Their manners are absurd, they disgust me with civilities, and their professions of friendship are insupportable. Adieu!

LETTER VII.

May 22.

That life is but a dream is the opinion of many; and it is also mine. When I see the narrow limits which confine the penetrating active genius of man; when I see that all his powers are wasted to satisfy mere necessities, the only end of which is to prolong a miserable existence: that our seeming care, with regard to certain enquiries, is but a blind resignation; and that we only amuse ourselves with painting brilliant figures and smiling landscapes upon the walls of our prison, whilst we see on all sides the boundary which confines us. When I consider these things, my dear friend, I am silent: I examine myself: and what do I find? Alas! more vague desires, presages, and visions, than conviction, truth, and reality: then all is chaos and confusion before my eyes; and, dreaming like others, I let myself be carried away by the stream. All pedants agree that children are ignorant of the cause which excites their will. But that the great children, as well as the little ones, should wander upon this earth, without knowing their original or destination; without any certain motive for their conduct, but guided, like them, by biscuits,

sugar-plums, and rods; is what nobody is willing to acknowledge; and yet nothing, I think, is more evident. I foresee what you will say in answer to this; and I will allow that the happiest among us are those who, like children, think not of the morrow, amuse themselves with playthings, dress and undress their dolls, watch with great respect before the cupboard where mamma keeps the sweetmeats, and when they have obtained some, devour them with avidity and cry for more. These are tranquil days, and they are happy beings who can thus be content with trifles. Many also are to be envied, who dignify their paltry enployments, sometimes even their passions, with pompous titles; and who represent themselves to mankind as beings of a superior order, whose occupation it is to promote their welfare and glory. But the man who, conscious of his weakness, perceives the vanity of these things, sees with what pleasure the wealthy merchant increases the enormous bulk of his fortune; observes the overgrown citizen retire from the bustle of the town, and transform his little garden into an imaginary paradise; with what eager assiduity the poor man, tho' bending beneath the weight of his burden, pursues his destined course; and that all wish equally to behold the sun a little longer; he too may be at peace; he may enjoy tranquillity, for he creates in imagination a world of his own, and is happy by reflecting that he is so exalted an animal as man; he is conscious, however, that his sphere is dreadfully limited; yet, the pleasing idea of liberty ever remains deeply impressed on his heart; that sweet reflection often recurs, and continually intimates, that he has the power of quitting his prison whenever confinement shall become insupportable.

LETTER VIII.

May 26.

You have long been acquainted with my partiality for particular spots; what preference I give to solitary scenes; how I make my arrangements, and settle myself in the enjoyment of them. I have found one here which entirely suits me. It is very delightfully situated upon the side of a hill, in a district called Walheim, about a league from the town. A path leading to it from the village commands a view of the whole country; and there is an extraordinary character of an old woman who sells wine, coffee, and tea, there; but what is better than all this, there are two lime-trees before the church which overshadow a little green, the delightful scite of many rural habitations. I have seen few places more retired and peaceful. I send for a chair and table from the old woman's, and there drink my coffee, and read Homer. It was by accident that I discovered this place in one of my afternoon rambles. The day was fine, the peasants were all at work in the fields, the place was entirely deserted, except by a little boy about four years old, who was sitting upon the ground, and holding between his knees a child of about six months; he now and then pressed it to his bosom with expressions of love, and then with his little arms made a sort of great chair for it; and, notwithstanding the vivacity which sparkled in his black eyes, as they strayed about the green, he sat perfectly still, as if fearful to disturb his little charge. Quite delighted with the scene, I placed myself upon a plough opposite, and taking out my pencil experienced the

most heart-felt satisfaction in sketching this affecting picture of brotherly tenderness. I added some part of the surrounding hedge, the barn-door, and some implements of husbandry, which lay scattered without order. In about an hour I found I had made a drawing of great expression and very correct design, without any assistance from invention, or inserting any thing of my own. This has confirmed me in a resolution I had made before, to copy nature only for the future. Nature is inexhaustible; will always supply new subjects for the pencil and pen; and alone form the greatest masters. What is urged in favour of rules, is nearly the same as what is said in favour of the laws of society. An artist formed on them, will indeed never produce any thing absolutely bad or disgusting; as a man who obeys the laws and observes decorum, can never be a decided villain or intollerable neighbour; but after all that can be advanced in defence of rules, they tend to alter the true features and genuine expression of nature. You will tell me that they only lop off superfluous branches, and prevent deformities; but I maintain that they operate as restraints to genius, and, that the errors they correct would be less detrimental to the art, than the loss of those beauties which they destroy. Let us, my dear friend, compare talents to love. Let us suppose a man sincerely attached to a young woman, dedicating to her all his thoughts, paying her every possible attention, exercising his talents, wearing his health, lavishing his fortune, purely to convince her that she is the sole object of his affection. Then comes a man of cold and correct understanding; a man who acts perhaps in a public character; and this very respectable person says to

him, 'My young friend, love is a natural passion, but it should be kept within due bounds. Make a proper division of your time; devote the best part of it to business, and give your leisure hours only to your mistress; calculate your income, and out of the superfluity make presents to her, but let that be seldom, only from time to time, on her birth-day, or on such like occasions.' If the young man take this advice, he may be a very useful member of society, extremely serviceable to his superiors, but as to his love it is annihilated; and if he be an artist or a poet, his superior faculties are extinct. The torrent of genius would not be so confined in its course; its impetuous waves would rise and astonish us, but that cold and narrow minded men have taken possession of the two shores. They have built houses and planted gardens upon its banks; but they tremble for their paltry erections, and dig trenches, and make dams to prevent the danger which threatens them.

LETTER IX.

May 27.

My enthusiasm, I find, made me fall into declamation and similies, and I forgot to finish my narrative. Enveloped in my ideas of painting, which I unfolded to you at large in my last letter, I sat for two hours upon the plough; and towards evening a young woman with a basket on her arm came running to the children, who were nearly in the same place. 'Philip, you are a very good boy,' she called out. I then advanced towards her, and enquired if she was the mother of those pretty children: she answered, that she was; she then gave the eldest a cake, and

taking the little one up in her arms, kissed it with a mother's tenderness. 'I entrusted the young child to the care of Philip,' said she, 'while I went to the town with their brother, to buy some bread, some sugar, and an earthen pot to make soup for Jenny (meaning the youngest). The rogues broke our pipkin yesterday, as they were quarrelling for some pudding that was left in it. I then enquired where her other son was; and while she was telling me that he was driving home two geese which had been feeding in the fields, he came skipping up to us, and gave Philip an osier twig. I continued talking with the mother, while she kept playing with the youngest child, whose eyes glistened with joy at her return, and found that she was the daughter of the schoolmaster of the village, and that her husband was gone to Holland, on the death of an uncle he had there. 'My husband feared that he might be cheated of the inheritance,' said she, 'for he had written, and received no answer to his letters; and so he went himself. I have not heard from him since he left me. God grant that no harm may have befallen him!' I parted from this woman with regret, but not till I had given her a creutzer to buy white bread for little Jenny, when she went next to town, and one to each of the boys; and so we parted. In truth, my dear friend, nothing is more calculated to appease a tumult of the senses, than the sight of such a tranquil being. She moves with a happy thoughtlessness in the limited circle of her existence; the past and the future give her no uneasiness; the present alone occupies her thoughts: day after day passes without disquietude; and the falling leaves raise no idea, but that of approaching winter. Since that first

evening I have often visited the same place. The children are become familiar; I give them a bit of sugar when I drink coffee; and at night they partake of my whey and bread and butter. On Sunday I regularly give them a creutzar; and if I am not there the old woman has orders to make the distribution. They are quite at their ease with me, tell me all they hear, and their simplicity pleases me. Their mother used perpetually to be calling out, and telling them they were troublesome. It was with difficulty I prevailed on her to let them act as they pleased.

LETTER X.

June 16.

Why don't I write to you?—Do you pretend to penetration and ask such a silly question? You might have supposed I was not unwell, but that—in a word, that I had found an acquaintance who is nearer to my heart—that I had found—I know not what I have found. To give you a regular account how I learnt to distinguish the most amiable of women, would be difficult. I am contented, therefore happy; and, consequently, a bad historian. To say she is divine; to call her an angel, you will tell me, is what every body says of the woman he loves: and yet I cannot describe to you how perfect she is, nor why she is so perfect; nor how she has captivated all my senses. So much simplicity with so elevated an understanding; so mild, and yet so animated; a mind so placid and a life so active. But these are only the common-place phrases of abstract ideas, and do'nt express a single trait of her character. At some future opportunity—but no it must be now

or never: for, between ourselves, I have, since I began this letter, been several times tempted to throw down my pen and fly to her: I had determined this morning not to stir from home the whole day; and yet I am continually running to the window, to look if the sun be up. I was not able to hold out: I went: I am now returned; and, whilst I am eating some bread and milk, will write to you.

Nothing can be more affecting than to see her in the midst of her little family. But if I go on in this manner you will know no more at the end of my letter, than you did at the beginning. Be all attention then: for I shall endeavour to give my narrative some order, and enter into a great many details.

You may remember, that some time ago I informed you I had made an acquaintance with Mr. J——, the prince's steward; and that he had invited me to visit him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. I however neglected going from time to time; and perhaps should never have gone, if chance had not discovered to me the hidden treasure contained in those tranquil shades of happy obscurity. Some young men of the town had requested me to accompany them to a rural ball in the neighbourhood, in which I very readily joined. I accordingly engaged a partner who was possessed of some beauty, and an agreeable disposition, tho' endued with no peculiar attractions. It was agreed that I should take a coach, and with my partner and her aunt, call on Charlotte, who was to accompany us to the ball. During the conversation which passed in the vehicle, the young lady informed me we were to be in company with a very great beauty. 'You will now see a most charming girl,' said my partner, as we turned into the ave-

nue which leads to the steward's house. 'And take care, sir, you don't fall in love with her,' added the aunt. 'Why?' said I. 'Because she is already engaged to a very worthy man,' she replied, 'who is now gone to settle his affairs on the death of his father, and solicit a very lucrative employment.' I heard this intelligence with perfect indifference, for I had been entirely inattentive to the sex, since the unfortunate loss of my Eleonora. When we arrived at the gate, the sun was sunk near the tops of the mountains, the air was heavy, and low black clouds seemed to be gathering upon the horizon. The women began to express their apprehensions that our journey would be interrupted; but, in order to cheer them a little, I put on a look of wonderful weather-wise sagacity, and assured them they had nothing to dread. I stepped out of the coach, when a woman came out and desired us to wait a minute for her mistress. I crossed the court, went up stairs, and, as I entered the room, I saw six children, the eldest of which was but eleven years old, all jumping about a young woman, very elegantly shaped, and dressed in a plain white gown with pink ribbons. She had a brown loaf in her hand, and was cutting slices of bread and butter, which she distributed in a graceful and affectionate manner to the children, proportioned to their age and appetite. Each held up its little hand while the slice was cutting, thanked her with the most affecting simplicity, and ran to the door to see the company, and look at the coach which was come to take their Charlotte away. 'I hope you will excuse me,' said she, 'for having given you the trouble to alight, and am sorry to detain the ladies; but dressing, and some domestic arrangements, made

me forget to give my children their accustomed meal, and they do n't like to receive it from any body else.' I said something, but I do'nt know what—my whole soul was taken up in admiration of her air, her voice, her manner; and before I could recollect myself, she ran into an apartment for her gloves and fan. Whilst she was absent the little ones looked at me askance, and whispered to one another. I went up to the youngest, who has a most pleasing countenance, and asked some trifling questions, but the little rogue drew back to avoid me. Charlotte just then coming in, said, 'Lewis, shake hands with your cousin.' The little fellow then held out his hand very readily, and I gave him a kiss. 'Cousin!' repeated I, to the engaging Charlotte, as I handed her to the carriage, 'do you consider me deserving the happiness of being related to you?' She archly replied, 'O! I have a number of cousins, and should be sorry if you were the most undeserving of the set.' When Charlotte took leave of the children, she desired Sophy, who was the eldest, to take great care of them, and to go to her papa when he returned from walking. She told the little ones to mind their sister Sophy as much as if it was herself; and they all promised faithfully they would, except a little fair girl of six years old, who looked rather discontented, and said, 'Ah! but she is not Charlotte, for all that; and we would rather it were you yourself.' During this time the two eldest boys had climbed up behind the coach.—At my request Charlotte gave them leave to go to the end of the wood, on condition that they would sit still and hold very fast. We had not long seated ourselves, the ladies had scarcely paid their greetings and salutations, and talked about

the company we were to meet, ere Charlotte stopped the coach, and desired her brothers to come down. They would kiss her hand before they left her: the eldest pressed it to his lips with all the tenderness of a boy of fifteen, and the youngest expressed much warmth and affection. She desired them to give her love to the children, and we then passed on. The old lady asked her if she had read the book she last sent to her. 'I cannot say I have,' said Charlotte, 'and will return it. I confess it has not pleased me better than the first you sent me. I was much surprised, when having asked her the title, she informed me it was the "Castle of Otranto." Penetration and sound judgment appeared in every thing she said: her observations were the result of reflection: I discovered new intelligence in every expression; encreasing rays of genius seemed to dart from every feature; and I perceived she had great satisfaction in finding herself understood. 'When I was very young,' said she, 'nothing afforded me so much pleasure as a romance. My delight was unequalled when I could retire on a Sunday afternoon, into some solitary corner, and read an affecting story of that kind. By degrees I lost a relish for improbable relations, and novels became more interesting. I then entered with my whole heart into the joys or sorrows of a Miss Jenny. "Grandison" and "Miss Harlow" have still some charms for me; but as domestic occupations prevent me from reading much, the books I do read should be suited to my taste. I prefer those authors whose subjects are adapted to my situation in life, that do not carry me to scenes in which I can have no interest; but such as describe the life I lead or wish to lead. They should be faith-

ful copies of nature. I want such as remind me of my enjoyments, which are a source of satisfaction and delight.' The close of her observations occasioned some emotion which I found it difficult to conceal, tho' it did not last long; for after she had given her opinion of a few more novels, amongst which she particularly noticed the "Vicar of Wakefield," with equal justice and discernment, I could not withhold from giving, with great eagerness, my own ideas on these subjects. Some time elapsed before I was sensible that we were in company, and had engrossed all the conversation. Charlotte addressed herself to the two ladies. The old lady looked at me several times with an air of raillery, which however I did not take much notice of. We then talked of dancing. 'If it be a fault to love dancing,' said Charlotte, 'I must own that I am extremely guilty; it is a most agreeable amusement to me. If I experience any unhappiness, I go to my harpsichord, play some of the lively airs I have danced to, and my uneasinesses are dissipated.' Only figure to yourself, my friend, this situation. My looks were stedfastly fixed on her fine black eyes, my attention so wholly engrossed by the strength and majesty of her ideas as scarcely to hear the words which expressed them. At length the coach stopped; I alighted like one who dreams, and found myself in the assembly-room, without knowing how I came there. The company was numerous. They began with minuets. I took out one lady after another, and those who were most disagreeable and awkward, were most anxious to prolong them. Charlotte and her partner began an English country dance. You cannot conceive my delight when she came to perform the figure with us.

You should see her: she seems to dance with all her heart and soul, as if she were peculiarly adapted for shining in this art. Her figure is elegance, lightness, grace. I went up to her and requested she would favour me with her hand for the second dance; she politely informed me she was engaged, but promised herself to me for the third; telling me, at the same time, with the most agreeable freedom, that she was very partial to allemandes. 'It is the custom here,' said she, 'for every couple to dance allemandes together; but my partner is not much used to them, and will be very glad to be excused. I have observed the lady with whom you have just danced is in the same predicament; but from the manner in which you danced yourself, you must do the walse very well; so if it be agreeable to you to dance the allemandes with me, go and propose it to my partner, while I mention it to your's.' The matter was quickly settled; and it was agreed, that, during the allemandes, Charlotte's partner should attend on mine. We began; and at first amused ourselves with making every possible turn with our arms. What grace, what animation she displayed in every motion! When the measure changed, the different couples began to turn round each other like spheres, tho' the unskilfulness of the greatest part of them produced some disorder. We prudently kept aloof till the awkward and clumsy had withdrawn: when we joined, there were but two couples left. I never in my life displayed so much activity. I was in imagination more than mortal. To hold in my arms the most lovely of women; to glide with her round the room as if in air; lost to every other object;—by the way, let me tell you, I formed, at that moment, the deter-

mination, that the woman I loved, and with whom I had made engagements, should never dance an allemande with any other man; and may I perish if—but you know what I mean. After taking a few turns round the room to recover our breath, Charlotte sat down, and I presented her with a few slices of lemon, all indeed that were left, which I took from the sideboard where they were making negus; she ate some with sugar and was refreshed by them. Politeness obliged me to offer some to the lady who sat next to Charlotte, and she very injudiciously took some. In the third country-dance we were the second couple. As I was turning my partner, and sympathizing in that pure and exquisite pleasure of which every motion of her arms and eyes was most strongly expressive, a grave midd e-aged lady, whose agreeable countenance had before attracted my notice, looked at Charlotte and smiled; then holding up her finger in a threatening attitude, pronounced the name of Albert, in a very significant tone of voice. 'And who is that Albert,' said I to Charlotte, 'if I be not too inquisitive?' She was going to answer, when we were obliged to separate for hands six round at bottom; and, in crossing over, I thought she looked pensive. When she gave me her hand to lead outsides, I repeated the question with earnestness. 'Why should I conceal it from you?' said she, 'Albert is a worthy man to whom I am engaged.' Tho' I had before received this intelligence from the ladies in the coach, it appeared new to me; for my thoughts had been entirely engrossed by the object that, in so short a time, had become so dear to me, the idea had not once recurred to my mind. I became disconcerted, confused, wrong in the fig-

ure, and put every body out; but Charlotte, by pushing one, and pulling another, set us right again.

Whilst we were dancing, the lightning, which had been seen some time in the horizon, and which I had declared to be only summer lightning, the mere effect of heat, became much more violent, and the noise of the thunder prevailed over that of the music. Three ladies ran out of the set; their partners followed; the confusion became general; and the violins stopped. It is remarkable, that when any distress or terror assails us in a scene of pleasure, it has a stronger effect on our minds than in any other situation; because the contrast makes us feel it more sensibly; or rather from our senses being more susceptible to all kinds of impressions, the change is more forcibly and quickly perceived. This may account, in some measure, for the extraordinary effects it produced on the ladies. One of the most courageous sat down with her back to the window and stopped her ears; another knelt down before her and hid her face in her lap; a third shoved herself between and shed abundance of tears: some insisted on going home; others, still more affected, did not attend to their indiscreet partners, who were stealing from their lips sighs which were addressed to heaven. Some of the gentlemen retired below stairs to smoke their pipes in peace; and the rest of the company very willingly followed the lady of the house, who had the good sense to conduct us to a room darkened by close window-shutters. We had no sooner entered, than Charlotte began to place the chairs in a circle, made us sit down, and proposed we should amuse ourselves with some trifling game, in order to pass away the remainder of the evening. The

prudes began to draw themselves up and look prim, and more than one of the belles shewed an impatient eagerness in expectation that *forfeits* or some such game would be proposed. After a warm debate, Charlotte proposed the game of *counting*, the laws of which she thus explained. 'Observe, I shall go from right to left; you are to count as you sit, one after another, from one to a thousand; and you must count as fast as you can. Whoever stops or miscounts is to have a box on the ear.' It was pleasant to see her move round the circle, with her arms extended. 'One,' said the first; 'two,' the second; 'three,' the third; and so on, till Charlotte began to increase the velocity of her motion, and then they lost their order and mistook: one had a box on the ear for laughing, another for saying the wrong number. I had two for my share; and was pleased when I imagined them harder than the rest. A general confusion and laughter put an end to the play long before we had counted the thousand. The storm by this time had considerably abated; and the company had formed into little parties: Charlotte and I returned to the assembly-room. As we were going, she observed to me, 'The blows I inflicted made them forget their apprehensions. I was as timid, perhaps, as any of them; but by affecting courage to keep up the spirits of the company, I really lost my fears.' We went to the window, and heard the thunder roll at a distance; a soft rain watered the fields, and filled the air with the most delightful and refreshing odours. Charlotte reclined her head upon her arm; her eyes surveyed the extent of country that lay expanded before us; then raised them to the skies, then turned them on me. I saw a tear

rest upon them. She placed her hand upon mine, and pronounced, in an emphatic tone, 'Klopstock!'* the sound beat upon my heart; I was overcome by a torrent of unutterable sensations. I sunk under the oppression of them. I reclined my face upon her hand, imprinted on it a fervent kiss, and wetted it with tears. When I raised myself, I looked stedfastly in her face. Her countenance had changed; her eyes were suffused with tears. Divine Klopstock! why didst thou not see thy apotheosis in Charlotte's eyes? And thy name so often profaned, why was it ever pronounced by any voice but her's?

LETTER XI.

June 19.

I have already forgotten where I broke off my narration; all I know is that it was two in the morning when I went to bed; and if I could have talked, instead of writing, to you, I certainly should have kept you till day-light. I believe I did not tell you what passed in our return from the ball; and to-day I have neither time nor inclination. It was one of the most beautiful and serene of mornings. All nature seemed refreshed, and the rain still dropped from the trees. Sleep had closed the eyes of our companions: Charlotte asked me if I were not inclined to sleep too; and desired I would not put any restraint on my inclinations on her account. 'So long as those eyes continue open,' said I, looking stedfastly in her face, 'I cannot close mine.' We continued to converse till the carriage stopped at her door, which was gently opened by the maid;

* A German poet.

who, in answer to Charlotte's enquiries, told her that her father and the children were well and in bed. I took my leave, promising to see her again in the course of the day; and I kept my word. Since that time the spheres have revolved unnoticed. I am regardless of day or night. The universe is lost to me.

LETTER XII.

June 22.

My days are undoubtedly as happy as those which are said to be reserved for the elect; and whatever may be my fate hereafter, I will never say that I have not tasted of happiness, and the purest happiness of life. You know my little retreat at Walheim; I am now entirely settled there: it is only half a league distant from Charlotte; there, secluded from the rest of the world, I enjoy myself, and all the pleasures of which a mortal is susceptible. When I selected Walheim for my recess, I little thought of its containing such a treasure. How often in my long rambles have I passed by that rural habitation, which now contains the object of my anxious care; how often have I looked at it; sometimes from the lofty summit of the mountain, and sometimes from the meadow on the opposite side of the river.

Man, unconscious of the riches which surround him, extends his view beyond his native clime, and wanders in search of new discoveries. Wearied or unsuccessful, he recals his former habits, and his mind, like a spring extended to its utmost limits, inclines him to return to his former circle, and to enjoy that repose which activity and exertion have denied. I was exceedingly attached to this spot the first time I saw it.

The splendid beauties of the valley; the wildness of uncultivated nature; the romantic appearances of broken hills, pointed rocks, little woods, and rivulets of water, interspersed with cottages and inclosures for cattle, render it one of the most charming places you can imagine. And yet I returned dissatisfied. Alas! my friend, distance is like futurity; a darkness is placed before us; and, in reflecting on the latter, our mental perceptions are involved in obscurity. We are powerfully attracted by the varied scene as it is presented in prospect; pursue its flitting objects with enthusiasm; and, after a tedious chace, find we have followed a shadow! In like manner, the most determined traveller, returns at length to his native country, and finds in his own cottage, in the circle of his family and acquaintance, that peace of mind, in search of which he had vainly traversed the whole surface of the globe. Here, secluded from the intrusions of the world, I lead a simple life. I rise with the sun, gather my own pease, and sit and shell them with Homer open before me. I then put them into the pot, place myself by the fire, make soup of them, and stir them as they boil. Reflections on the patriarchal life give me the most calm and agreeable ideas; and which I now realize as my own. I feel, my dear friend, the innocent and simple pleasure of the peasant, who sees upon the table the cabbage he has raised with his own hand; and who, while he enjoys his vegetable meal, remembers with delight the fine morning on which he planted it, the mild evenings on which he watered it, and the pleasure he had in seeing it grow and flourish.

LETTER XIII.

June 26.

The day before yesterday the physician of the town came to pay a visit to the steward. He found me upon the floor playing with the children; we were romping, and making a great noise. The doctor is very ceremonious, very formal, and very solemn; adjusts the plaits of his ruffles whilst he is talking with you, and draws up his chitterling to his chin at the conclusion of every speech. He thought this conduct of mine very much beneath the dignity of man. I perceived from his countenance he was much out of humour. I however disregarded his frowns, and continued to rebuild the houses of cards which the children had blown down. He told every body, on his return, that the Steward's children were spoiled enough before, but now Werter was entirely ruining them. You know I am fond of children, their manners affect me. When I observe in the little beings the seeds of those virtues and qualities which will one day be so necessary to them; when I see in the obstinate, all the future firmness and constancy of a great and noble character; in the capricious, that levity and gaiety of temper which will make them lightly pass over the dangers and sorrows of life; and when I perceive them all openness and simplicity, then I call to mind the divine words of our teacher, "If you do not become like one of these." When I consider that these children are to succeed us on the stage of life, and perhaps act a great, a superior, part, when we are no more, I cannot forbear regarding their embrio ideas, or lamenting our

defective mode of education, which regards them as subjects and vassals, and suffers them not to have any will of their own. Have we then none ourselves? and whence derive we this exclusive right? Is it because we are older and more experienced? Adieu! my dear friend; I know this letter has not trespassed on your patience; I am acquainted with your heart, and you know mine. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

July 1.

Charlotte is gone to spend some time in the town; she is with a very deserving woman, whose physicians have resigned her to fate, and who desired to have Charlotte with her in her last moments. I know from experience she is capable of administering the most balmy consolation to the sick, for my heart is much diseased. I went with Charlotte last week to see the vicar of S——; at a small village in the mountains, about a league from hence. Her youngest sister was with us. We reached the place about four o'clock. When we came into the court, which is shaded by two fine walnut-trees, the good old man was sitting upon a bench before his door. As soon as he perceived Charlotte, he forgot his old age and his oaken stick, and, rising from his seat, began to advance towards her: but she ran to him, and having made him sit down again, she placed herself by his side. She then presented her father's respects, and played with the youngest of his children. I wish you could have observed her attention to this good old man, and have heard her raise her voice because he was a little deaf, and tell him of young and healthy

people, who had died suddenly in the bloom of life, when it was least expected; commending the virtues of the Carelstad waters, and approving his intention of trying their efficacy next summer, and assuring him he looked better than he did when she saw him last. During this time I paid my respects to his wife who is some years younger than himself. The old man seemed in high spirits; and, as I was miring the beauty of his walnut-trees, which formed such an agreeable shade over our heads, he could not withhold giving us the history of them. 'As to the oldest,' said he, 'we don't know who planted it; some say it was by one vicar and some another; as to the youngest, it is exactly the age of my wife; it will be fifty years old next October; her father planted it in the morning, and towards evening she came into the world. He was my immediate predecessor here, and I cannot express to you how fond he was of this tree; and it is certainly not less dear to me. My wife was sat knitting upon a log of wood, under this very tree, when I first set foot in this court five and twenty years ago.' Charlotte enquired after his daughter: he said she was gone with Mr. Schmidt into the meadows, to see the hay-making. He then resumed his history, and told us how he proceeded to insinuate himself into the good graces of the old vicar, and his daughter; how he became first his curate and then his successor. He had scarcely finished his story, when his daughter returned accompanied with Mr. Schmidt, and affectionately saluted Charlotte. She is a genteel, lively, brown girl; with whom, in the country, a sensible man might pass his time very happily. Her lover, for such Mr. Schmidt immediately appeard to be, has

an agreeable person, but was very reserved, and would not join in the conversation, notwithstanding the utmost endeavours of Charlotte to urge him. I was uneasy at it, because I perceived by his countenance that it arose from caprice and ill humour, and not from want of talents. This opinion was, unfortunately, soon confirmed: for, as we were afterward taking a walk, I entered into conversation with the vicar's daughter, and the countenance of this gentleman, which is naturally dark, became so gloomy, that Charlotte pulled me by the sleeve to make me desist. There is not any thing gives me more concern than to see men engaged in tormenting one another; particularly when in the flower of their age, in the very season of pleasure, they waste their few short days of sunshine in idle disputes; and only feel their error when it is too late to repair it. This idea rested on my mind; and during our collation, the conversation turning on the happiness and misery of human life, I could not help taking that opportunity to inveigh severely against ill-humour. 'We are apt,' said I, 'to complain that our days of happiness bear a very unequal proportion to those which are tinged with misery; and it appears to me that we have little cause of complaint. If our minds were always disposed to enjoy the good things which providence has granted us, we should always acquire fortitude sufficient to support the pressure of unavoidable evil.' 'But,' said the vicar's wife, 'we cannot always command our tempers; so much depends on the constitution; when the body is ill at ease, the mind is so likewise.' 'Well, let us consider this disposition then as a disease,' I answered, 'and see if there be not a remedy for it.' 'That is more to the purpose

said Charlotte, 'and I think a great deal may be effected in that way. For instance, when any thing disturbs our temper, let us try to avoid it by setting about some active employ, or by having recourse to any amusement that has been observed to tranquillize the mind.' 'That is precisely what I meant,' I replied; 'ill-humour may be compared to sloth. Man is naturally indolent; but if he once overcomes that propensity, he goes on with alacrity, and finds a real satisfaction in being active.' The vicar's daughter listened very attentively, but did not say any thing. The young man objected, that we were not masters of ourselves, and still less of our feelings. I observed, 'the habit in question was a disagreeable one, and one that every body wished to get rid of; that we don't know the extent of our strength till we have tried it; that the sick consult physicians, and submit to the most scrupulous regimen and the most nauseous medicines, to recover their health.' I perceived that the worthy vicar inclined his head to listen to our conversation. I therefore raised my voice, and addressing myself to him said, 'There is scarcely a crime, sir, which the eloquence of the pulpit has not been employed to suppress; but I don't believe that any person has hitherto preached against the spleen.' 'It is for those who preach in towns,' said he, 'to discourse on that subject, for peasants are strangers to it; tho', indeed, it would not be amiss to do it here now and then, were it only for the benefit of my wife and the steward.' This made us all laugh, and so did he very heartily; but it gave him a fit of coughing which interrupted us for some time. Mr. Schmidt resumed the subject. 'You have made ill-humour a crime,' said he, 'in which, I think, you

have exaggerated the matter.' 'Far from it,' said I; 'if what is pernicious to ourselves, and to others, deserves the name of crime. Are we not unfortunate enough in not having the power of communicating happiness to each other, without attempting to deprive each other also of that satisfaction, which, left to ourselves, we might often be capable of enjoying? Where is the man who inherits ill-humour, and who hides it; who bears the whole burden of it himself, without interrupting the pleasures of those about him? Ill-humour arises from a consciousness of our own want of merit; from a discontent, concomitant with envy, and engendered by weak vanity. We dislike to see others happy, when their happiness is not the work of our own hands.' Charlotte looked me in the face, and smiled at the warmth with which I spoke; and a tear starting from the eye of the young woman, induced me to proceed. 'Woe be unto those,' said I, 'who employ their power over a heart, to deprive it of that simple innocent pleasure it is formed naturally to enjoy! No gifts, however sumptuous; no attention, however marked; can, for a moment, repair the loss of that native satisfaction, which the envy of a tyrant has destroyed!'

At this moment, my heart was full; I could not proceed: some recollections pressed on my mind; and my eyes were filled with tears. 'We should every day say to ourselves,' I exclaimed, 'in the words of a celebrated Roman, *What good can I do for my friends?* We can only endeavour not to interrupt them in their pleasures, and attempt to increase their happiness by participation; for when their souls are tormented by a violent passion, when their hearts are rent with grief, we cannot afford them

the smallest consolation: and when, at last, a fatal malady seizes the unhappy being, whose untimely grave was prepared by thy hand; when, stretched out and exhausted, he raises his dim eyes to heaven, and the damps of death are upon his brow—then thou standest before him like a condemned criminal; thou seest thy fault, but it is too late; then thou art conscious of thy want of power; thou feelest, with bitterness, that all thou canst bestow, all thou canst do, will not restore the strength of thy unfortunate victim, nor procure for him a moment of consolation!' In pronouncing these words, the remembrance of a like scene, at which I had been present, obtruded, with all its weight. I put my handkerchief to my eyes, and retired abruptly; nor did I recover myself till I heard the sound of Charlotte's voice, which called me to go home. As we walked back, with what tenderness she chid me! How kindly she represented to me, that I was too much affected with what I undertook. She urged, that the deep interest, and the heat with which I entered into every thing, would wear me out, and shorten my days! Yes, Charlotte, I will promise to take care of myself; I will live *for you*.

LETTER XV.

July 8.

What a child I am! why should I sigh with impatience too meet a single look? How can I be so silly? We have been at Walheim: the ladies went in a carriage, but alighted to walk. Whilst we were walking I thought the eyes of Charlotte—but I was mistaking—however I will tell you in two words, for

I am half asleep. When the ladies went into the carriage again, young Welst, Selfstadt, Andran, and myself, were talking to them at the window; the young men were gay, and full of spirits; I watched Charlotte's eyes; they wandered from one to another, but did not fix on me; on me who stood motionless, and who saw nothing but her. My heart was bidding her adieu a thousand and a thousand times, and she deigned not to give me a single look. The coach went off, and a tear was ready to start. I followed her with my eyes. She put her head out at the window and looked back. Alas! was it for me that she looked out? I know not, and uncertainty perhaps is my comfort. Good night! I perceive my own weakness.

LETTER XVI.

July 10.

You cannot imagine, my friend, how foolish I look in company, when her name is mentioned, when any one speaks of her, or when I am asked how I like her. How I *like* her! I detest the phrase. What must the man be who can barely *like* Charlotte, whose mind and senses are not captivated by her? How I *like* her! Some time ago, I was asked how I *liked* the poems of Ossian.

LETTER XVII.

July 13.

No, I am not mistaking—her eyes declare the interest I have in her heart. I perceive it. Yes, the information of my senses confirms the flattering idea, that she——dare I pronounce it? Yes, I will write

the interesting words—SHE LOVES ME! Oh! how the idea exalts me in my own mind. How—yet, I may tell you, for you are capable of understanding me. How I honour myself, and cherish my being, since I am beloved by the dear girl. Am I too presumptuous? No, it is a consciousness of truth. And who—who shall supplant me in the heart of Charlotte? Yet when she speaks of Albert with respect and tenderness, I feel as one may suppose a man does who is degraded from his rank, deprived of his power, and compelled to deliver up his sword.

LETTER XVIII.

July 16.

How my heart palpitates, and the blood boils in my veins when by accident I touch her hand!—when my feet meet her's under the table, I draw them back with precipitation; but a secret power causes me to place them forward again, and my senses become disordered. She makes me her confidant; but little knows what torment she puts me to, by communications in which Albert has a share. When she places her hand upon mine; or, when, in the eagerness of conversation, she draws her chair near to me; and when I feel on my face her balmy breath, the sudden effect of an electrical shock is not more striking. Oh! this ingenuous confidence! If I should ever dare——O, my friend! you are acquainted with my heart—you know it is not corrupt: it is weak, indeed, very weak; and I fear that may be a degree of corruption. I look on her as sacred. In her presence I have no further wish; I desire nothing; but my soul becomes expanded beyond its usual narrow lim-

its. There is a favourite air of her's, which she plays on the harpsichord with uncommon energy: it is striking, touching, and yet simple. As soon as she begins it, care, sorrow, pain, all is forgotten. I think I perfectly comprehend all that is said of the magic of ancient music. At times, when I am ready to lay down the burden of existence, she plays that air, and the darkness which hung on my intellects and clouded my brow, is dispersed, and I am restored to tranquillity.

LETTER XIX.

July 18.

What is the whole world to our hearts without love? It is the optic machine of the Savoyards without light. As soon as it is illuminated, the whimsical figures appear on the whitened wall; and if love only shew us shadows which pass away, yet still we are happy, when, like children, we are transported with shining phantoms? I shall not see Charlotte to-day; company, which I could not avoid, prevents me. I however sent the little boy who waits on me to ask her for the favour of the book she was reading last night, that I might at least have something which had been lately in her hands. I waited for his return with impatience. As soon as he had withdrawn I could not forbear kissing the book. The famous stone of Bologna, when placed in the sun, is said to attract its rays, and retain them, so as to give light a considerable time after it is removed into the dark. The book was just the same to me. The thought that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on its pages, that her fingers had turned over its leaves, made it dear, and interesting to me.—I would not

at that time have parted with it for a thousand crowns. Beware of laughing at me, my good friend; nothing which makes us happy is an illusion.

LETTER XX.

July 19.

When I awoke in the morning, I opened my window, saying, 'To-day I shall see her,' and looked at the sun. Yes, I shall see her, and I have no further wish to form during the whole day, all is included in that thought.

LETTER XXI.

July 20.

I cannot approve your scheme of sending me to the ambassador. I hate subordination and ceremony; and we all know too, that he is a hard disagreeable man; he tires one with forms. You say my mother is anxious to hear I am employed. The idea makes me laugh. Am I ever idle? And if I be but shelling peas and beans, it is in fact just the same. In this world our greatest portion is misery; and those who in compliance with its customs, are accumulating riches, or acquiring honours, in my opinion, are madmen.

LETTER XXII.

July 24.

Since you are so much interested about my progress in drawing, I am sorry to inform you I have of late drawn very little. I have had, indeed, an historical piece a long time before me, but I cannot get forward with it. I am more inclined to copy Nature;

I understand her better; I am fond of copying her sublime parts; but my state of mind is such that I am incapable of the application and perseverance necessary to enter into the minute details, and express the smaller beauties of her appearance. My executive powers fail; I cannot make an outline; every thing seems to swim before my sight! I think I should succeed better if I were to attempt something in relief. If this indisposition last much longer, I will make a trial with clay or wax. I have begun Charlotte's picture three times, and three times have dishonoured my pencil. I am not as usual. Not long ago I was accounted happy in taking likenesses; I know not how it is, but, at present, my hand is quite out. I have, however, taken a shade of her, and must content myself with that.

LETTER XXIII.

July 27.

I have frequently resolved not to see her so often; but it is more easy to talk than to act. Every day I yield to the temptation, and when I return at night, I say to myself, I will not go to-morrow; but on the morrow I find myself with her again. Do n't imagine, however, that reasons are always wanting. One evening she said, 'You 'll come again to see us to-morrow:' how could I then avoid going? Another day the fineness of the weather invites me to walk. I therefore stray to Walheim; when I am there, it is but half a league farther, and I must needs walk forwards. I remember well my grandmother's story of the huge mountain of loadstone. When any vessel came within a certain distance of it, the nails flew to

the mountain, and the unhappy crew perished amidst the disjointed planks.

LETTER XXIV.

July 30.

Albert is arrived. Were he the best and most perfect of men, and I in every respect his inferior, I could not endure to see him in possession of so many charms, so many excellencies. I have seen him, my dear friend; I have seen this happy husband: he is a handsome, well-bred, worthy man, whom one cannot help liking. It was a fortunate circumstance for me that I was not present at their first meeting, it would have rent my heart; and he has been so kind as wholly to restrain his fondness for Charlotte in my presence. Heaven reward him for it! I cannot but esteem him for the regard he entertains for her. He discovers to me attention and marks of respect; but I am certainly indebted to Charlotte for them. Women always endeavour to keep up a good understanding between their friends: sometimes it does not succeed; when it does, they are sure to be gainers by it. I really cannot withhold my esteem for this man. The even tranquillity of his temper forms a striking contrast with the impetuosity of mine; and yet he has a good deal of feeling, and seems to know the value of that treasure which he possesses in Charlotte. He appears very little subject to ill-humour; which, you know, of all faults, is the one I am least inclined to excuse. He looks on me as a man of understanding and taste. My attachment to Charlotte, the deep regard I shew for every thing that relates to her, augment his triumph and his love. I

will not enquire whether he may or not, in private, sometimes teaze her with little jealousies; for, were I in his place, I should not be quite easy. Be that as it may, the pleasure I have enjoyed in Charlotte's company is at an end. Shall I call it blindness, folly, or infatuation? It wants no appellation; it is too obvious. Before Albert arrived, I knew all that I do at present; I knew I could have no pretensions to her, nor did I claim any; and yet here I am, like an ideot, staring with astonishment, because another has taken her from me. I reflect on my past folly; I hate and despise myself; but I should despise him still more, who could enter into a grave argument, in order to convince me that, since no remedy was to be procured, I should act with becoming resolution; and——but I cannot endure such vain reasoners.

Yesterday, after having rambled a long time in the woods, I returned to Charlotte's house. I found her sitting in the arbour at the bottom of the garden, with Albert by her side. I knew not what to do with myself. I was seized with a species of frenzy, danced, sung, played the fool, and was guilty of a thousand extravagancies. 'For heaven's sake,' said Charlotte to-day, 'let me beg of you that we may have no more acting like that of last night; you are quite alarming in your violent spirits.' Between ourselves, my friend, I have lately undertaken to watch Albert's motions, and when he is engaged in business I run there, and am pleased when I find Charlotte alone.

LETTER XXV.

August 8.

Believe me, my dear friend, when I talked of a person who might advise me, and said, "I cannot endure such vain reasoners," I was very far from thinking you could be one of them: but perhaps you are in the right. I will only make one objection. Of two opposite methods which are proposed, one seldom takes either; there are as many various lines of conduct and opinion as there are turns of feature in the human countenance. Give me leave, then, to grant all your conclusions and contrive a middle way for myself, to slide between them. You say, that I either perceive a possibility of obtaining Charlotte, or I do not. In the first case, I ought to continue the pursuit, and spare no pains or time in the accomplishment of my wishes: in the second case, you advise me to act as becomes a man, and cast aside an unfortunate affection, which will consume my strength, and end in despair. All this is very proper, my dear friend, and it is what may easily be said. Would you require of a feeble man, languishing under a low disease, which is fast and insensibly wearing out his constitution, that he should put an end to his miseries by a dagger or a pistol? Does not the same disorder which exhausts his bodily strength, deprive him of that firmness of mind which is necessary in the application of so desperate a remedy? But, as there is no end of comparisons, you might, in return, send me a simile of the same kind.—Who would refuse to lose a limb, rather than risk his life by deferring the amputation? Perhaps

many would.—But,—I will desist. There are times in which I have resolution to go away, but I know not where to go.

LETTER XXVI.

August 10.

There seldom happen in the life of any one man so many agreeable circumstances as combine to promote the happiness of mine. Yet extrinsic advantages alone do not constitute that desirable state. Alas! I feel it strongly, that happiness depends entirely on the mind. To be considered as forming a part of the most amiable family in the world; to be loved by the father as a son, by the children as a brother, and by Charlotte —— and the worthy Albert, who studies, by every cordial affection, to make me his friend, and prefers me to every one but her. I say, if this can constitute happiness, why am I not the happiest mortal existing? You would be very much pleased to hear us converse about Charlotte as we walk together. In fact, nothing can be more ridiculous than our connection; and yet when I reflect on its nature and tendency, I am frequently softened even to tears. When he talks to me of Charlotte's most respectable mother; when he describes her last moments, and that most affecting scene, in which she gave up to her daughter the care of her children and family; when he relates how this amiable and dutiful child immediately assumed another character; what a skilful economist, an active housewife, and a tender mother she became; every day displaying all these qualities, and yet preserving her agreeable cheerfulness and vivacity; I walk by his side,

pick up flowers by the way, and arrange them with great care in the form of a nosegay; I examine it as I walk, and then cast it into the first brook I come to, watching it gently glide down the stream and sink.

I do not recollect whether I told you that Albert is to settle here. He is much esteemed at court, and has obtained a place which brings in a considerable salary. I have seen few men so punctual and methodical in business.

LETTER XXVII.

August 12.

Albert is certainly one of the best of men. We had yesterday a very singular conversation together, which I will relate to you. I went to take leave of him; for I had determined to spend some days in the mountains, from whence I now write to you. As I was walking backwards and forwards in his apartment, I observed his pistols. I asked him to lend them to me for my journey. 'You are very welcome to them,' said he, 'if you will take the trouble of loading them, for they are only hung there out of form.' I took them down, and he continued: 'Ever since I had like to have suffered for my precaution, I have left off keeping loaded fire arms.' I desired him to tell me what the accident was. 'I was at a friend's house in the country, some time ago,' he replied, 'and had always slept in perfect tranquillity, tho' my pistols were not loaded; but the thought occurred to me, as I was sitting, in an indolent humour, one rainy afternoon, that it was possible the house might be attacked in the night, and robbed, and that the pistols might be useful, and that we might—in short, you know how one goes on when one has

nothing better to think of. I therefore gave them to my servant to clean and load. He was thoughtlessly trying to frighten the maid, when one of the pieces went off; the rammer was in; it went against the girl's hand and tore off her thumb. You may imagine the lamentations and noise we had; and moreover a surgeon's bill to pay. Since that accident I have never kept any loaded fire-arms in my house. Vain, indeed, is all the precaution of man; alas! my friend, he cannot foresee or avert the dangers which impend over him!' I like every thing in this man except his perpetual *indeeds;* and yet every rule, you know, has its exceptions. Nothing can exceed the correctness of Albert's behaviour. He is besides so ingenuous, and so fearful of giving offence, that wherever he thinks he has advanced a doubtful or too general an assertion, he never ceases to moderate, and qualify, and extenuate, till at length it appears that he has said nothing at all. On the present occasion, he became, according to his custom, deeply immersed in his text. His words were unimportant to me, I no longer attended to him; but lost myself in reflections of my own. In my reverie, I put the mouth of the pistol to my forehead. 'What do you mean,' cried Albert, snatching the pistol from my hand. 'Why, it is not charged,' said I. 'And tho' it be not,' he answered, with impatience, 'what do you mean by it? I cannot imagine how a man should be so mad as to shoot himself; and the very idea of it makes me shudder.' 'Pray, sir,' said I, 'how is it possible that any person, when speaking of an action, can with justice pronounce, without hesitation, that it is mad, or wise, or good, or bad? What can such rash decisions mean? The interior motives of the ac-

tion should rather be carefully examined.—The reasons which gave it birth, and which made it necessary, should be fairly unfolded. If you had done this your decision would have been less abrupt.'

'However,' said Albert, 'you must own that some actions are criminal in their nature, from whatever motives they proceed.' I shrugged up my shoulders in assent. 'Still, my good friend,' said I, 'there are more exceptions to be made. Theft is a crime: but the man who is driven to it by extreme poverty, who takes from the superabundant wealth of his neighbour, with no other design than to save himself and family from perishing for want; must he too be punished? Is he not rather an object of our compassion? Who would throw the first stone at a husband, who, in the height of just resentment, sacrificed a faithless wife, and her insiduous seducer? Or what person would be daring enough to stand forth the accuser of a youthful maiden, who in a moment when the impulses of nature rose superior to the restraints of prudence, and her whole soul melted into love, falls a victim to the fascinating arts of an unprincipled seducer? Our very laws, in such cases, pedantic, cold, and cruel as they are, relax their severity, and withdraw their punishment.'

'These examples are not to the purpose,' said Albert; 'because a man, under the influence of a violent passion, is incapable of reflection, and is looked on as a drunkard or a madman.' 'O! ye men of cool reflection and sound understanding,' I replied, smiling, 'you are very ready to pronounce sentence, and talk of irregularity, and madness, and intoxication; you are calm and immovable; you avoid the drunken man and detest the extravagant; you pass

on the other side like the Priest, and like the Pharisee, you thank God that you are not like one of them. I have more than once experienced the effects of drinking; my passions, at those times, have bordered on extravagance, and I am not ashamed to own it. In truth, has not every man of superior talents, who has done any great or extraordinary action, ever been treated as intoxicated or mad? Even in private life, if a young man do any thing uncommonly noble and generous, the world immediately says, he is out of his senses. Take shame to yourselves, ye people of discretion; take shame to yourselves, ye sages of the earth!' 'There now, this is one of your extravagant flights,' said Albert; 'you are perpetually going beyond the mark; and here you are most undoubtedly in the wrong, to compare suicide, which is the subject in question, with great actions; for it can only be looked on as a weakness. It is much easier to die than to bear a life of misery with fortitude.' I was on the point of breaking off the conversation; for nothing deprives me sooner of patience than to hear common-place opinions, which mean nothing, whilst I am pouring out my soul in fervent ideas. However, I checked my rising indignation; for having often heard this pitiful argument, I am become accustomed to it. But I answered with some warmth, 'you call suicide a weakness; beware of being carried away by sounds! If a nation, groaning under the iron hand of oppression, were at last to throw it off, and break their chains, would you call them weak? The man who to save his house from flames which have already invaded it, exerts all his strength, carries burdens with ease which he could scarcely move when his mind was at

peace; he who, rendered furious by insult, attacks and puts to flight half a score of his enemies; can these men be accused of weakness? My worthy friend! if resistance be an indication of strength, can the highest degree of resistance be called a weakness?' Albert hesitated; looked at me stedfastly; and said, 'Begging your pardon, I think all the examples you have brought are quite inapplicable to the subject in question.' 'That may not be wholly improbable,' I answered, 'for I have often been told, that my way of combining things appeared absurd. Let us attempt then to represent this matter in a different light. Let us enquire what is the situation of a man who resolves to lay down the burden of life—a burden that is in general so much desired—and let us enter into his feelings; for we cannot otherwise reason fairly on the subject. 'Human nature,' I continued, 'has certain limits; there is a degree of pleasure, sorrow, and pain, which it can support; but beyond that degree it is annihilated. We are not, therefore, to enquire whether a man be weak or strong, but whether he be able to sustain the portion of mental or corporeal evil, which has fallen to his share. It certainly is as absurd to say, that a man who terminates his own existence is a coward, as to call a man a coward who dies of a malignant fever.' 'Paradox! all paradox!' exclaimed Albert. Not so paradoxical as you imagine,' I replied: 'you must allow that we call a disease mortal, by which nature is so severely attacked, and her strength so far exhausted, that what remains is not sufficient to put her machinery again in motion. Let us apply this to the mind, and examine how impressions fix on it, and how ideas operate, till at length a violent passion

takes entire possesion, destroys all the powers it inherited before, and entirely subdues it. It is in vain that a man of sound understanding and cool temper sees the miserable situation of a wretch in such circumstances; it is in vain that he gives him advice; for he is in the situation of a man in health, who sits by the bed of his dying friend, without being able to communicate to him the smallest portion of strength.'

Albert thought this reasoning too general. I adduced the instance of a young girl who had lately drowned herself, and made him recollect her story. 'An innocent young creature, so accustomed to the narrow sphere of domestic labour, and the daily occupations of ordinary life, that her greatest pleasure consisted in taking a walk in the fields on a Sunday, dancing perhaps once in the holidays, and the rest of her time talking with her next neighbour about the news and little quarrels of the village. At length her heart feels hitherto unknown wishes; her former amusements afford no gratification; they grow insipid. She accidentally becomes acquainted with a man, to whom a new affection imperceptably attaches her. From that time her hopes are all concentered in him; she is inattentive to the whole surrounding world; she sees, hears, desires nothing but him; and he alone occupies all her thoughts. Simple, unsuspicious, and ignorant of the baneful pleasures arising from light vanity, her wishes tend immediately to the object of them; she hopes to belong to him, and in eternal bonds expects to enjoy all the desires of her heart, and to realize the ideas of happiness which she has formed. His ardent vows and repeated promises confirm her hopes; his fondness encreases her passion; the joys of anticipation overwhelm her with

delight. At length, she stretches out her arms to embrace the object of her affections—the delusion vanishes—her lover has forsaken her! Amazed! petrified! she stands senseless before the abyss of misery which she sees encompasses her; all around is darkness; for her there is no prospect, nor hope, nor consolation: she is forsaken by him in whom her life was bound up. The wide universe is to her a vacuum. Among so many who might repair her loss, she feels alone, and abandoned. Thus blinded, thus impelled, by the piercing grief which wrings her heart, she plunges into the watery deep; its surface is for a moment ruffled; it closes over her; and her torments are at an end. Such, Albert, such is the history of many men. And is not the case parallel with that of illness? Nature had no way to escape: her exhausted powers were unable to contend with increasing torment, and death became the consequence. Woe unto that man who can hear this situation described, and can say, "A foolish girl! why did she not wait till time had worn off the impression? her despair would then have been softened, and she would have found a new lover to comfort her." One might as well say, "An ideot! he died of a fever! Why did he not wait till his blood was cool,—till he had recovered his strength? then all would have been well, and he would now have been alive!" Albert, who did not allow the comparison to be just, made many objections: amongst the rest, that I had only brought the example of a simple and ignorant girl; but he could not comprehend what excuse could be offered for a man of sense and education, whose views being more enlarged, render him capable of discovering greater sources of consolation.' 'My good friend,' said I,

'whatever be the education of a man, whatever be his understanding, still he is not more than man; and the reason he possesses, either does not act at all, or acts very feebly when the passions are let loose, or rather when the boundaries of human nature close in on him.—Nay more'——I recollected myself, broke off abruptly, said,'we will talk on this subject another time,' and took up my hat. Alas! my heart was full. We parted without conviction on either side. How rarely do men understand each other!

LETTER XXVIII.

August 15.

It is certain, that what renders men necessary to each other, is a similarity of taste and sentiment. I perceive that Charlotte would not lose me without regret; and as to the children, they every day ask me to come again on the morrow. I went this afternoon to tune Charlotte's harpsichord: but I was prevented from completing it by the children; for they all gathered about and joined in desiring I would tell them a story. Charlotte too was desirous that I should please them; so I related them my best tale of "Henry and Peter; or the Effects of Presumption and Inexperience." You cannot think how I myself am improved by this exercise, and am surprised at the impression that moral tales, adapted to the understandings of children, make on their minds. If I repeat a story that I have told them before, and omit any particular incident, or invent an additional one, the little rogues do not fail to tell me, 'it was not so the first time;' so that I now endeavour to relate them invariably in the same manner; and even to

observe, as nearly as possible, the same tone of voice. From hence I perceive that an author may injure his works by altering them even for the better. First impressions are readily imbibed, and fix most deeply, whether they owe their force to reason or credulity. Whoever afterwards endeavours to efface them will seldom succeed, and never meet with commendation.

LETTER XXIX.

August 17.

Is it necessary that what at one time constitutes the happiness of man, should change and become the source of his misery? That ardent sensibility which animated my heart with joy at the contemplation of nature, which poured on my senses a torrent of delight, and raised an imaginary paradise around me, is now become an insupportable torment, a demon which pursues and harrasses me incessantly. In times past, I contemplated, from the tops of high rocks, the broad river, which, far as eye could reach, watered the fertile plain. Every thing put forth, and grew, and was expanded. Around me all was in motion. I saw the mountains covered to their summits with high and tufted trees, and the vallies in their various windings sheltered by smiling woods; the peaceful stream gently glided through the trembling reeds, and in its calm surface reflected the light clouds, which a soft zephyr kept suspended in the air. I heard the birds animating the woods with their song. Millions of insects danced in the purple rays of the sun. The arid rock afforded nourishment to the moss, and the sands below were covered with broom. The vivifying heat which animates all nature, was

every where displayed before my eyes; it filled and warmed my heart. I was lost in the idea of infinity. Stupendous mountains encompassed me; precipices were before my feet; torrents fell by the side of me; impetuous rivers ran through the plain; rocks and mountains resounded from afar; and in the depths of the earth I saw innumerable powers in motion, and multiplying to infinity. All the beings of the creation, of a thousand tribes and a thousand forms, move upon the earth and in the air; and man hides himself in his little hut, and, vauntingly cries, "I am lord over this vast universe." Weak mortal! all things appear little to thee, because thou art little thyself. Craggy mountains, deserts untrodden by the foot of man, even the unknown confines of the immense ocean, are animated by the breath of the Eternal, and every atom to which he has given existence and life, finds favour in his sight. Ah! how often, at those times, has the flight of a sea-bird, which passed over my head, inspired me with a desire to traverse the infinite extent of space; that I might transport myself to the regions of eternal happiness; there to drink the pleasures of life, from the cup of Omnipotence; and to taste, if but for a moment, of the beatitude of the Creator, *in whom we live, and move and have our being!* The bare recollection of these times still gives me pleasure: the vehemence of mind with which I recal the sensations that give me faculties to express them, raises me above myself, and makes me doubly feel my present anguish. The curtain drops, the scene is changed; instead of prospects of eternal life, a bottomless pit is for ever open before me. Can we say of any thing that it exists, when all passes away, when time in its rapid pro-

gress carries every thing with it, and our transitory existence, hurried along by the torrent, is either swallowed up by the waves or dashed against the rocks? There is not a moment which does not prey on me, and on all around me; and every moment I am destined to be destroyer. The most innocent walk deprives of life thousands of inoffensive insects: one step destroys the curious fabric of the industrious ant, and changes a little world into a chaos. It is not the great and uncommon calamities of the world, the floods which sweep away whole villages, the earthquakes which swallow up our towns, that touch and affect me. What saps my heart, is that hidden, destructive power, which exists in every thing: the most compact bodies, the substances of the firmest texture contain the principles of their own dissolution. Nature has formed nothing which does not consume itself, and every thing that is near it: so that, surrounded by earth and air, and by an infinitude of active powers, I wander with an aching heart; and the whole universe appears to me a frightful monster, eternally occupied in devouring and regorging.

LETTER XXX.

August 20.

It is in vain that I stretch out my arms towards her, when I awake in the morning, after the ill omened visions of night; it is in vain that I seek her, when a pleasing dream has happily deceived me and placed me by her side in the fields, when I held her hand and pressed it to my lips: alas! while yet half asleep, I still fondly imagine I touch her, but when I awake entirely—tears flow from an oppressed heart; and,

bereaved of all consolation, I weep over the woes to come.

LETTER XXXI.

August 22.

I am of late exceedingly altered. My active faculties have degenerated into uneasy indolence. I am listless—indifferent to every thing—and yet I cannot remain idle. I am unable to think—reflection harrows my soul. I am insensible to the beauties of nature, and books are disgusting to me. I have given myself up entirely to one object of contemplation, and every other faculty is grown torpid. I often wish I were a mechanic; for then, when the morning came, I should have some pursuit for the day; or, at least labour would divert expectation and anxiety. I often envy Albert, when I see him buried in a heap of papers and parchments; and I say to myself, if I were in your place I should be happy. Impressed by this notion, I have often thought of writing to the minister for the place which you have assured me I might obtain. I really believe I might have it; for he has long shewn a regard for me, and has often told me I should seek some employment. But when I reflect, that if I suffer myself to be trammelled in the routine of office, I may repent the sacrifice of liberty. I say, when this reflection occurs, I know not on what to determine. Do not mistake me, my dear friend, this desire of change is not the consequence of a restless spirit which would equally pursue me in every situation; but to a desire to try if occupation and change would not tend to divert me from reflections on my wretched destiny, and soften the rigours of fate.

LETTER XXXII.

August 28.

If my misfortune could admit of any cure, I should certainly find it here. This is my birth-day. This morning I received a small parcel from Albert. It had been directed by the hand of Charlotte:—on opening it, I found one of the knots which she had upon her sleeve the first time I saw her, and which I had several times asked her to give me. Albert had inclosed two volumes in 12mo. of Wetstein's Homer, which I had long wished to have, the Ernesti edition being inconvenient to carry with me when I walked out. You see how they anticipate my wishes; how well they understand those little attentions of friendship, infinitely superior to the ostentatious presents of the great, which are always humiliating. I kissed the sleeve-knot in raptures, for it recalled the memory of happy days—days which can never return. Such, my friend, is our fate. I do not murmur at it. The flowers of life are of transient duration. Many of them fade ere they are mature, and leave no trace behind! How few are succeeded by fruit, and the fruit how rarely does it ripen! And then, too often, alas! that little which has ripened and remains, is suffered to perish and decay! Adieu!

The weather here is delightful. In Charlotte's orchard I often climb into a tree, and chuse pears for her, while she stands under it, and catches them as I let them fall.

LETTER XXXIII.

August 30.

Wretch that I am! do I not take pleasure in deceiving myself! and am I not without understanding? I address no prayers but to Charlotte; my imagination sees nothing but her; all that surrounds me is of no account, but as it relates to her. In this state I enjoy some happy hours, till obliged to tear myself from her presence; which, alas! the strong emotions of my heart often render necessary. Sometimes, when I have been sitting by her two or three hours, quite absorbed by her manners, her intelligence, her various endowments, so congenial to my own, ideas by degrees steal on my senses, by which I am wrought up to madness.

LETTER XXXIV.

September 2.

I will go. I was in doubt, but you have determined me. My dear friend, I thank you sincerely. I have, for a fortnight past, been resolved to quit this place. It must be so. She is gone to the town, and is at the house of a friend. Albert is with her—and ——but I must, I will, go from hence.

LETTER XXXV.

September 3.

What a night, my friend, has been the last! But it is over, and I can henceforth endure any thing. I shall see her no more. No, I shall see her *no more* I am waiting for day-light, and shall then set out—

but where can I go beyond the reach of myself? Charlotte is now at rest; she does not know that she will never see me more. I tore myself away; and had the resolution not to betray my intention during a conversation which lasted two hours. Albert had promised to meet me in the garden, with Charlotte, immediately after supper. I was standing upon the terrace, under the thick chesnut trees, looking at the setting sun; which my eyes, for the last time, saw descend beneath this delightful valley. I had often visited the same spot with Charlotte, and contemplated with her the same inchanting prospect. I repeatedly traversed this walk, so dear to me. A native sympathy had often detained me there, before I knew Charlotte; and we were pleased, when in the dawn of our friendship, we discovered in each other a parity of sentiment, and a predilection for this place. Under the chesnut-trees there is an extensive view—but I remember to have mentioned this to you before, and described how high copses inclose the end of it; how the walk through the wood becomes darker and darker, till it ends in a recess, formed by the thickest trees, and which has all the charms of gloomy solitude.—I still remember the tender melancholy which came over my heart the first time I entered this silent deep retreat. Perhaps it was a secret foreboding that it would one day become the scene of my happiness and of my torment. After passing half an hour in expectation, I had fallen into painful reflections on the uncertainty of human happiness, when I heard them walking up the terrace. I ran to meet them, and, shuddering, I took Charlotte's hand and kissed it. Having reached the top of the terrace, we descried the moon, rising behind the wild shrubs

that deck the mountain's top. We conversed on various subjects till we found ourselves at the dark end of the avenue. Charlotte entered my favourite recess, and sat down. Albert placed himself on one side of her, and I on the other. But my agitated mind would not suffer me to rest. I arose, stood before her, walked backwards and forwards, and sat down again;—my faculties were violently perturbed. Charlotte made us observe a fine effect of moonlight, at the end of the wood, which appeared the more striking and brilliant, from the darkness which surrounded the place in which we were seated. The profound silence of the night, and the solemnity of this interview were particularly adapted to my situation of mind. But the unknown and dark envelope of futurity distracted me. We remained for some time in profound silence. Charlotte at length said, 'Whenever I walk by moonlight, I think of those who were dear to me, and who are no more; and I reflect on death and a future state. Yes,' continued she, 'we shall certainly exist hereafter; but, shall we find one another out? shall we know one another? Werter! what presages have you? What is your opinion?' 'Charlotte,' said I, holding out my hand to her, my eyes full of tears, 'I hope we shall meet again, here and hereafter.' I could say no more. Ah! how could she put such a question to me, when the thoughts of a long separation was tearing my heart? 'Oh,' continued Charlotte, 'that those persons who have been dear to us did but know that we recal their memories with tenderness, and recollect the happy times which are past. I imagine the shade of my mother hovers round me, when in a serene evening I sit in the midst of her

children—when they are assembled about me, as they used to be assembled about her! I hope she sees that I fulfil the promise which I made to her in her last moments, of being a mother to them! A hundred times I have exclaimed, Pardon, dearest of mothers, pardon me, if I am not to them all that you were! God knows, that I do all I can; they are properly clothed and fed; nay, more, they are well educated and beloved! If you could behold our mutual attachment, the harmony that subsists among us, you would give thanks to that being to whom, dying, you addressed such fervent prayers for our happiness.' She said more than this, but it is impossible to do justice to her expressions; how should cold and unfeeling characters be affected by the effusions of genius! Albert gently interrupted her. 'My dear Charlotte,' said he, 'you are too much affected. I know these recollections are dear to you, but I intreat you not to pursue them.'—'Oh, Albert!' said she, 'I know you have not forgotten those tranquil evenings when, during the absence of my father, and when the children had retired to rest, we used to sit round our little table. You often had a book in your hand, but you seldom read any;—and who would not have preferred the conversation of that intelligent woman, to every gratification in the world! The benevolence of her mind corresponded to the placid serenity of her countenance; and her activity in the discharge of her domestic duties was invariably marked by cheerfulness and content. God knows how often I have humbled myself before him, and prayed that I might be like her.'

I threw myself at her feet; I took her hand, and wetting it with my tears exclaimed,—'Charlotte!

Charlotte! the benediction of heaven is upon you, and the blessings of your mother ever attend you.'— 'Werter, if you had but known her,' she said, and pressed my hand,—'she was worthy of your acquaintance.' I was motionless; never had I received praise so flattering. 'And this charming woman,' she continued, 'died in the very flower of her age; the youngest of her children but six months old. Her illness was short; she was resigned and calm; the only anxiety she experienced, arose from her concern for the fate of her children, and more particularly for that of the youngest. When she found her exit drawing near, she bade me bring them to her. I brought them, and they stood by her bedside. The little ones were not sensible of the loss they were going to sustain, but the great ones were quite overwhelmed with sorrow. I still see them round the bed. She raised her feeble hands, hung over them, and prayed God to be a father to them; she then kissed each of them, bade them all farewell, sent them away, and said to me, 'Charlotte! be you their mother!' I gave her my hand, in token of obedience. 'You promise much, my child, a mother's tenderness and a mother's care! But the goodness of your disposition assures me you will fulfil it. Shew the same kindness and affection to your brothers and sisters which you have ever shewn to me; 'tis all I ask. To your father be dutiful and faithful as a wife, so will you be the comfort of his declining age.' She then asked for him. He had retired to resign himself to grief, and to conceal the agonizing conflict. 'You, Albert, were in the room. She heard somebody move, enquired who it was, and desired you to come to her. She looked at us

both with great composure and expressive satisfaction, saying, 'you will be happy; your union will constitute happiness!' At this part of Charlotte's narrative, Albert took her in his arms, and exclaimed, 'Yes, Charlotte, we are and shall be happy!' Her description was too affecting, even for the cold phlegmatic Albert, for he was moved. As for me, I was out of my senses. 'And this amiable and interesting woman,' she continued, 'was destined, Werter, to leave her family, where she was truly happy! Incomprehensible Providence! are the very objects we hold most dear, to be thus torn from us? The children, who were most keenly sensible of this calamity, cried and lamented for a long time afterwards, and said, that black men had carried away their dear mamma!' Charlotte now arose. I was rouzed; but continued to sit, holding her hand. 'We must, go,' said she, 'for it is late,' and attempted to withdraw her hand, but I held it fast. 'We shall meet again,' said I; 'we shall find each other out; whatever may be our state, whatever our form, we shall again know each other. I am going; I must go: yes; I am going from inclination; but if it were for EVER, the idea would be insupportable. Adieu, then, Charlotte! adieu, Albert!—But we *shall* meet again.' 'Yes, to-morrow,' added Charlotte, smiling, Charlotte's *to-morrow* struck on my heart. Alas! she scarcely knew when to withdraw her hand. They went down the avenue. I stood and looked after them, then threw myself upon the ground, violently agitated. After a short conflict, I arose, ran up to the terrace, and under the shade of the lime-trees, could still discern her white gown waving near the garden-gate. I stretched out my arms towards her —but she disappeared.

LETTER XXXVI.

October 20.

I arrived here yesterday. The ambassador, is indisposed, and intends to remain here some days. If he were less peevish and morose all would go well. I perceive it, but too plainly, that fate has reserved me for severe trials; but I will not suffer my spirits to droop; with a little levity one may bear any thing. I cannot help smiling at the word which has just escaped me; a little of that *levity*, which I am totally without, would make me the happiest of men. And must I despair of my faculties and of the gifts of nature, whilst others, of far more inferior, strength and talents, are parading before me, proud of their endowments? Almighty power! who hast given me the qualities I possess, why do I not inherit self-complacency and confidence? But patience, and all will, I hope, be better; for I acknowledge, my dear friend, that you were in the right: since I have been obliged to mix continually with other men; since I have had an opportunity of observing their designs, their behaviour, and their conversation, I am become more easy, and more satisfied with myself. As we naturally compare ourselves with every thing we meet, our happiness or misery depends on the objects we are conversant with. In solitude, our imagination, which is ever disposed to soar, feeds on fantastic images, and creates to itself orders of beings, of which man is the last and most inferior. In this manner things appear of more importance than they are, and those seem our superiors who in reality are not. On the

other hand, by directing our endeavours to some certain end, and steadily persevering in the pursuit, we shall often find, in spite of weakness and disappointment, that we have made more way by continually tacking, than others with all the assistance of wind and tide; and the judgment we form of ourselves, by comparison, will be true, whether we be equal or superior to them.

LETTER XXXVII.

Nov. 10.

I begin to think my situation more tolerable. I am much occupied; and the multitude of actors who surround me, and the different characters they perform, make a very amusing variety in the scene. I have made an acquaintance with Count C——, who daily gains on my esteem. He is a man of an extensive genius, and acute discernment; yet he is not, on that account, cold in his temper, or distant in his manner; his sensibility surpasses all his other qualities. He conceived a friendship for me the first time we met. I had some business to transact with him. He perceived we understood each other, which caused him to lay aside the ceremonial of form, and assume the most pleasing familiarity. His affability and candour afford me the highest satisfaction. Indeed, I know not any thing capable of imparting greater pleasure to an ingenuous disposition, than the unreserved confidence of a great mind.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Dec. 24.

My fears are realized. The ambassador's conduct is really insupportable. He is the most punctilious blockhead I had ever the misfortune to meet with. He goes on, step by step, with the trifling minuteness of an old woman; and as he is never satisfied with himself, how is it possible he can be pleased with others? I like to go on with business regularly and with dispatch; and when it is finished that it should be finished. But when I present him a draught, he is capable of returning it, with 'It will do, but go over it again, there is always something to correct; one may find a better phrase or a properer word.' At those times I lose all patience. Not a conjuction, not one connecting word must be omitted; and as to the transpositions which I like, and which flow naturally from my pen, he is their mortal foe. If every sentence be not expressed exactly in the style of the office, he is quite lost. A man had better suffer martyrdom than have any connection with such a being! The friendship of Count C—— is my only consolation. He very frankly told me, the other day, how much he was displeased with the scrupulous circumspection and extreme tardiness of the ambassador. 'Men of his disposition,' said he, 'make every thing troublesome to themselves, and to all with whom they have any concern; but one must submit, as a traveller who is obliged to climb over a mountain; if the mountain were not in the way the road would undoubtedly be shorter and more convenient; but since it is there, it must be

passed.' The old man perceives the Count's partiality for me, which irritates his bad temper. He takes every opportunity to depreciate the Count, in my presence. I naturally undertake his defence, and his displeasure is increased. Yesterday, I perceived, that when he aimed a blow at my friend, he intended that it should also hit me.—'For the common affairs of the world,' said he, 'the Count may do very well; his style is good, and he writes with facility; but, like other great geniuses, he has no solid learning.' I longed to strike him; for to what purpose is argument with such kind of animal? However as that was not practicable, I was forced to content myself with telling him, with a considerable degree of warmth, that the Count was a man who had the strongest claims to respect, both on account of his understanding and character; that he was the only man I had ever met with, whose extensive genius raised him so high above the ordinary level, and yet was so complete an adept in all the minutiæ of business. This was agebra to his conceptions; and I withdrew while he was gaping for an explanation, lest some new absurdity should disturb me still more.

It is you who are the authors of my slavery; you, all of you, who forced me to bend my neck to this yoke of servitude, by continually preaching on the subject of activity. Activity! if the man who plants potatoes, and carries them to market, be not more usefully active than I am, then let me labour ten years longer at the cursed galley to which I am now chained! What splendid misery and disgusting lassitude are visible in the fashionable societies of this town! How the ambition of rank impels them to toil and watch for precedency!—Wretched

and contemptible passion, which they have not the sagacity to hide! There is a woman here, for example, who is perpetually endeavouring to entertain the company with long accounts of her family and possessions. If a stranger were to hear her, he would suppose her a weak creature, whose brain had been disordered by the unlooked-for bequest of an estate, or the unexpected devolution of a title: but what is most ridiculous, she is no more than the daughter of a steward's clerk in the neighbourhood. I cannot conceive how any human being can be so devoid of common sense, as to render herself such an object of contempt. Indeed, my friend, I perceive more than ever how absurd it is to judge of others by one's self. Since my own heart and imagination are so impatient of restraint, that it is with much difficulty I stop the ferment of my blood, and keep my heart at peace. I willingly allow others to pursue the paths they have chosen, and I desire them to permit me to move in mine. I am extremely dissatisfied with the ridiculous distinctions which prevail among the citizens. I know that inequality of condition is inevitable and necessary, and that I derive advantages from it; but I would never suffer it to operate as an obstacle to any earthly enjoyment. I have lately become acquainted with a Miss B——, a very agreeable girl; who has preserved the unaffected freedom of nature amidst the pride, formality and stiffness of those about her. The first time we met we were mutually pleased with each other's conversation; and, when we parted, I requested permission to pay my respects to her at home; which she granted with so pleasing a frankness, that I waited with impatience for the time to

avail myself of it. She is not of this place, but resides here at present with an aunt. The old woman's countenance was far from pleasing; however I paid her great attention, and often addressed myself to her. In about half an hour, I nearly guessed what her neice has since acknowledged; that in her old age, with a small portion of wealth, and still smaller share of understanding, she has no satisfaction but in running over a long list of her great ancestors; no protection but her noble birth, with which she surrounds herself as with a rampart; and no amusement but in standing at her window to look down with sovereign contempt on the ignoble heads which pass under it in the street. This ridiculous old woman appears to have been formerly handsome, but her life has been trifled away. Many a young man was the sport of her caprice; that was the golden age. When her charms had faded, she was forced to accept of an old officer, and be subservient to his rigid discipline; that was the age of brass. She is now a widow, and would lead a life of perpetual solitude, if the disposition of her neice was not amiable; this may be called the iron age.

LETTER XXXIX.

Jan. 8, 1772.

What men are these!—Their whole study is the science of forms. They employ their time and thoughts for a whole year, in meditating how they may advance nearer to the upper end of the table by one chair only. But don't suppose them to be idle people; for, on the contrary, they increase their labours by giving to these trifles that attention which

ought to be employed on important concerns. One day last week, a grand party was formed for an excursion upon the ice in sledges; but when every thing was ready, a dispute commenced on a point of precedency, and it ended by breaking up the party. What ideots! who are incapable of perceiving, that rank, in place or precedency, does not constitute true greatness. The man who occupies the highest station is often a mere cipher. Many a king is governed by his minister, and many a minister by his secretary. Who, in these cases, should be accounted the first and chief?—That man, certainly, whose merit is superior to his associates; and who is able to render their passions and power subservient to his own designs.

LETTER XL.

Jan. 20.

I now write to you, my dear Charlotte, while I am seated here in a little cottage, which has afforded me shelter from the violence of a storm. During my melancholy residence in the town of D——, among strangers—strangers indeed to my disposition—I was never inclined to write to you. But the moment I found myself in this solitary hut, whilst the snow and hail are driving against the window, I was restored to you and to myself. On my entrance, your image rushed on my imagination, and the remembrance of you filled my heart! Sacred remembrance! tender recollections! Gracious Heaven! restore to me that first moment in which I beheld you! O that you could but see me, my Charlotte, in that vortex in which I have been lately involved, where every thing dissipates, and nothing touches me! My senses

are become callous; I never experience that fulness of heart which flows from excess of pleasure; nor do I shed a single tear of sensibility or tenderness; the fountain is dried up. I stand motionless, as the astonished spectator of some curious piece of mechanism; in which puppets move before my sight, and I frequently question myself, whither the whole be not a visual illusion. The puppets become objects of my amusement; or I form the object of theirs. I lay hold of my neighbour's hand, I feel that it is made of wood, and draw back my own with horror!

I have found but one being here who is of the same order with you,—a Miss B. She certainly resembles you, my dear Charlotte, if it be possible that any one can resemble you. 'Ah!' you will say, 'he has learnt to make elegant compliments.' And there is some truth in the remark. I have lately been exceedingly polite, not having it in my power to be any thing better. The women tell me I possess a great portion of wit, and that nobody understands better how to deal out panegyric—'and *lies*,' you will add, for one always accompanies the other.——But I meant to talk to you of Miss B. She has great sensibility, and a superior understanding, which beam from her fine blue eyes. Her rank is a burden to her, and gratifies no one propensity of her mind. She dislikes the frivolity of high life; and we often indulge ourselves, for hours together, in talking of happiness in retired and rural scenes. You are not forgotten in our conversations. She knows you, she does homage to you; and it is not exacted, for she loves you, and delights to hear me talk of you.

Oh! why am I thus distant from you! Why am I not seated with you in your favourite little room, and

the children playing around us! If their noise became troublesome to you, I would tell them a story, and they would croud about me with silent attention.

The sun is now setting; his retiring rays glisten on the snow which covers the face of the country; the storm has subsided; and I must return to my prison. Adieu! Is Albert with you? and in what capacity? Fool that I am, for having asked this question!

LETTER XLI.

Feb. 17.

The ambassador and I don't seem likely to continue much longer together; the man grows really insupportable. His manner of transacting business is so truly ridiculous, that I cannot refrain from contradicting him; and frequently pursue the dictates of my own judgment, in opposition to his directions; which, of course, displeases him. Of this he has lately made a complaint to the minister, from whom I have received a reprimand; conveyed, indeed, in terms of mildness; but still it was a reprimand; and I had resolved to resign, when I received a private letter from the same hand—a letter which humbled me, and excited my adoration of the wise, the exalted genius which dictated it. He has employed the most sublime sentiments to correct my painful sensibility; and, with a candour which reflects the highest honour on his mind, bestows great approbation on my schemes; commends my activity, penetration, and influence, as springing from an ardent disposition, equally natural and becoming to youth. I am exhorted, not wholly to subdue my impetuous disposition, which carries me on too violently, but

to soften it, and keep it within due bounds, that my abilities may have a fair field for exertion. Thus am I reconciled to myself, and encouraged to proceed a little longer—at least for a week to come. Content, and peace of mind, are valuable acquisitions, my dear friend; but if they be precious they are also transitory.

LETTER XLII.

Feb. 20.

The benedictions of the Almighty attend you, my dear friends! and may he bestow on you that happiness which he has denied to me! I thank, you, Albert, for having deceived me. I expected to have been informed when the nuptials were to have been celebrated, and on that day had determined to take down Charlotte's picture from the wall, and to have buried it with some papers. You are now united and the picture is still there. Well, let it remain. Why should it not? Does not Charlotte find room for me in her heart? Yes, Albert, without an infringement of your rights, it is engraven on her heart. I hold, at least, a second place in that sacred repository of virtue, and no earthly consideration shall induce me to forego it. I should run distracted if I thought she could forget me—there is hell in that thought. Albert, farewell! Charlotte, most accomplished of women! farewell!

LETTER XLIII.

March 24.

I have written to court for permission to resign; and I sincerely hope to obtain it. You must pardon

me for not having previously consulted you. It is absolutely necessary that I leave this place; and I am aware of every thing you can urge to induce me to stay; but I was determined on the measure. I beg of you to soften this account, as much as you can, to my mother, when you acquaint her with it. I am unable to do any thing for myself, how therefore can it be expected I can assist another? She will undoubtedly be grieved to find, her son has stopped short in that career which would have raised him to the rank of a privy counsellor, or ambassador, and to see me thus returning to my original nothing. You may argue on the subject as long as you please, and combine all the reasons which should have urged me to remain, to no purpose, for I am resolved to go. But that you may not be ignorant whither, let me inform you that the Prince of —— is here, who, having heard of my intention to resign, has given me a pressing invitation to pass the spring months with him, at his country house. He has promised to lay no restraints on me; and as we agree tolerably well, I shall venture to accompany him.

LETTER XLIV.

April 19.

I thank you for your two letters. I waited for my answer from court before I wrote to you. I was under continual apprehension lest my mother should apply to the ambassador, in order to defeat my purpose. However the business is done, and my dismission is in my pocket. I will not tell you with what reluctance it was given, nor what the minister wrote in his letter to me; you would only have fresh

cause for lamentations. The hereditary Prince has made me a present of twenty-five ducats, accompanied with an expression that affected me almost to tears; my mother, therefore, need not send the money I wrote for.

LETTER XLV.

May 5.

I shall set out to-morrow; and as my native place is but six miles out of the road, I will pay a visit to it, and recal to my remembrance the days of my childhood, when care and sorrow were unknown. I shall enter at the same gate which I came through with my mother, when, after my father's death, she left that delightful retreat to immure herself in your wretched town. Adieu, my dear friend; you shall have some account of my journey.

LETTER XLVI.

May 9.

I performed my excursion to the place of my nativity with the devotion of a pilgrim; and experienced many affecting sensations, which I little expected. When I had approached near the large lime-tree, which stands about a quarter of a league from the village, I alighted from the carriage, and ordered the postillion to go on, that alone and on foot, I might more fully, and without interruption, enjoy the pleasures of recollection. I stopped beneath that lime-tree which generally marked the end of my walks. How things have since changed! At that period of happy ignorance, I languished after a world I did not know, in which I hoped to find all the enjoy-

ments my heart often felt the want of. And now, that I am returned from that world what, my dear friend, have I brought back? Disappointed hopes, unsuccessful plans. I beheld again that chain of mountains which had often excited the most pleasing sensations. I used to sit looking at them, for whole hours, ardently longing to lose myself in those thick woods and valleys, which render the prospect so charmingly variegated; and when my leave of absence had expired, with what reluctance did I quit this favourite spot! As I drew near to the village, I recognized such of the gardens and summer-houses, as had been familiar to me. I disliked the new ones, and all the alterations which had been made since I was there. I entered the village, and once more felt myself at home. I shall not attempt to detail all the circumstances of this visit, because the trivial objects which were interesting to me, would prove tedious in the recital. I had determined to lodge in the market-place, near our old house. In going thither, I remarked that the school-room, formerly tenanted by a venerable matron, had become the habitation of an unlettered mechanic. I recollected the tears I had shed, the little anxieties and heart-achs I had suffered in that confinement. Every step was marked by some particular impression. No pilgrim in the Holy Land ever met with more vestages to attract his attention, or ever experienced stronger sentiments of devotion. I will mention one sensation of the thousand which I experienced.—Having followed the course of a little brook to a farm, which likewise was formerly a favourite walk, and where I and other boys used to amuse ourselves with making ducks and drakes upon the

water. I was here most forcibly struck with what I then was; remembering how often I looked at the water as it flowed, and formed romantic ideas of the different countries through which it was going to pass, till my imagination was exhausted and my mind bewildered in the contemplation of inaccessible distance. Exactly such, my dear friend, were the sentiments of the proud lords of antiquity. And is not the style of Ulysses, when he talks of the immeasurable ocean, and of the unlimited earth, better adapted to the circumscribed faculties of man, than when, in this philosophic age, every school-boy thinks himself a prodigy of science because he can repeat, after his master, that the earth is round?

I am at present with the Prince at one of his lodges. He is a man of great candour and simplicity, and I am much pleased with him: what I dislike is his credulity, which urges him frequently to talk of things, that he has only slightly read or heard of, with the same degree of positiveness, as if his knowledge were derived from investigation and experience. I am sorry to say, that he values my talents and acquirements much more highly than the solidity of my judgment, and ardent love of virtue, which constitute my sole pride; from whence I derive all my perseverance, happiness, misery, and every thing—which makes me all I am, and are truly my own. Alas! the small portion of knowledge I possess may be easily acquired by any one.

LETTER XLVII.

May 25.

I had formed a plan which I did not intend to communicate to you till it was accomplished. Now that it has failed, I may acquaint you with it. I had taken a resolution to go into the army, and it was my principal motive for accepting the invitation of the Prince. He is a general in the service of ——. I communicated my design to him in one of our walks. He disapproved of it, and assigned reasons, which it would have been madness to oppose.

LETTER XLVIII.

June 11.

Say what you please, I can stay in this place no longer. What should I do here? I am weary of it. The Prince, it is true, treats me in all respects as his equal; but still I perceive I am out of my sphere; our souls are not congenial. He has a good understanding, but it is quite of that common kind which affords me no better amusement than the perusal of a well written book. I shall stay here one week longer, and then return to my former itinerant life. What I have done best, since I came to this place, are some drawings. The Prince has some taste for the arts, and would have more if it were not cramped by scientific jargon and learned rules. When a glowing imagination is giving to art and nature the most lively expression, he will stop me with elaborate criticisms, on which he highly values himself. Then I frequently lose all patience.

LETTER XLIX.

June 18.

Whither am I going? I will tell you. I am obliged to continue here a fortnight longer; after that, I intend to visit the mines of ——. But, to be sincere with you, this is a delusion. The real truth, then, is, I want to be nearer to Charlotte. Tho' I perceive this weakness of my heart, yet I cannot refuse to obey its dictates.

LETTER L.

July 29.

Oh no; 't is well—'t is all well. I her husband!—Eternal Power that gave me being, if such happiness had been reserved for me my whole life would have been one continued thanksgiving! But I will not murmur. These fruitless desires may be forgiven. What pleasure would it be to clasp in my arms the most amiable of her sex! My whole frame is convulsed when I see Albert put his arm round her waist.

I am certain, my dear friend, that she would have been happier with me than with Albert. He was not made for her. He wants sensibility or sympathy; he wants——in short, their hearts do not beat in unison! Ah! my dear friend, how often in reading to her an interesting passage, has an indescribable unison of sympathy and opinion been unfolded; how often have I perceived, that nature intended us for each other! Yet Albert loves her with his entire soul; and what does not such love deserve?

I have been interrupted by an insufferable visit. My sorrows are somewhat dissipated. Adieu!

LETTER LI.

Aug. 4.

I am not alone unfortunate. All mankind are disappointed in their hopes, and deceived in their expectations. I have been to see the good woman who lives upon the green near the lime-trees. The eldest boy ran to meet me; he screamed for joy, which brought out his mother. She looked much dejected. 'Alas! my good sir,' said she, 'our poor little John is dead.' He was the youngest of her children. I said nothing.—'And my husband,' she continued, 'came back from Holland without any money; he was taken ill with an ague; and if some good people had not kindly relieved him, he must have been obliged to beg along the road.' I was unable to speak to her: I gave some money to the boy; and she offered me some apples, which I accepted; and, full of sorrow, left the place.

LETTER LII.

Aug. 21.

The transitions of my mind are as rapid as they are violent. A sudden gleam of joy will sometimes interpose its friendly light, to cheer my drooping spirits; but, alas! it is momentary. When I am thus lost in reveries, I cannot help saying,—'If Albert were to die, I then might——yes, Charlotte would'——and I pursue the phantom till it leads me to the brink of a precipice, from which I start back with horror! When I go out at the same gate, when I take the same road which conducted me, for the

first time, towards Charlotte, my heart sinks within me; and I feel, with bitterness, how changed a being I am. The happiness I then knew is fled—fled for ever! The world is no longer the same. My heart beats with different sensations. No traces of the past remain. If the shade of a departed prince could return to visit the superb palaces he had built in happy times, and left to a beloved son; and were to find them reduced to ruins by the destructive incursions of an enemy, such would be his sensations.

LETTER LIII.

Sep. 3.

Sometimes I cannot comprehend how she can love another—how she dares love another, whilst I carry her in this heart—whilst she fills and engrosses it—whilst I think only of her, and have nothing but her in the world.

LETTER LIV.

Sept. 6.

I have left off, with the greatest reluctance, the blue frock which I wore the first time I danced with Charlotte; tho' it was perfectly shabby: but I have procured one exactly like it, and with a buff waistcoat and breeches. I do not however like it so much as the original, yet I hope it will in time become equally dear to me.

LETTER LV.

Sept. 15.

I often wish myself out of the world when I reflect on the number of contemptible beings which exist in it, who are so wholly devoid of sensibility, that they neglect entirely the very objects which are worthy the attention of themselves and others.

You will recollect the wallnut-trees at S——, under which I sat with Charlotte at the worthy old vicar's. These beautiful, these beloved trees, how they adorned the parsonage yard! over which their venerable branches cast a respectable shade, and carried one back, with pleasing ideas, to the good pastors who planted them. The schoolmaster has often repeated to me the name of him who planted the eldest, which he had learnt from his grandfather. 'Ah! he was a most excellent man,' he would say, 'and under these trees his respectable memory was ever sacred to me.' The same schoolmaster had tears in his eyes yesterday, when he told me they were cut down. Cut down! Had I been present, I should, in my fury have murdered the ruffian who dared to aim the first blow. Must I indure this? I who would have put on mourning if I had had two such trees in my court, and one of them had died of old age? But this is not all. Humanity was concerned in the act, for the whole village murmurs at it, and I hope the good peasants will make no more presents to the vicar's wife, and that she will suffer for the mischief she has done, for *she* did it, the wife of the present incumbent. Our good old man went before his trees! A tall skeleton, who is continually indisposed, and

having little enjoyment of life despises the world, and is despised by it in return; an ideot, who affects learning, pretends to examine the canonical books, and to be writing a New Moral and Critical Reformation of the Christian Religion; who sagaciously shrugs up her shoulders when the enthusiasm of Lavater is mentioned; such a being only could have cut down my wallnut-trees. The recollection of this conduct rouses my indignation. And the reasons she gives are absurd. The leaves which fell from them made the court damp and dirty; the branches intercepted the light, and little boys, throwing stones at the nuts, affected her nerves and interrupted her profound meditations, while she was employed in weighing the separate merits of Kennicott, Semler, and Michaelis. When I found all the inhabitants of the village, and particularly the old people, displeased, I asked them why they suffered it? 'Ah! sir,' said they, 'when the steward gives orders, what can we poor peasants do?' One circumstance, however, gives me pleasure; the steward and the vicar—who for once expected to derive some advantage from this woman's caprice—had agreed to divide the trees between them; when the revenue officer being informed of it, took possession of all the trees and sold them to the best bidder. They are still lying upon the ground. Oh! that I were a sovereign prince, how I would deal with the vicar's wife, the steward, and the revenue officer!—But if I were a prince, what should I care for the trees which grew in my dominions!

LETTER LVI.

Oct. 10.

Only to look at her dark eyes is to me happiness. What affects me is, that Albert appears not so happy as he expected to be, as I should have been. If—— I hate broken sentences; but at present I cannot express myself otherwise. Heavens! and am I not explicit enough?

LETTER LVII.

Oct. 12.

Ossian has taken the place of Homer in my heart and imagination. Into what a world does the illustrious bard lead me! To wander in heaths and wilds, surrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, in which, by the feeble light of the moon, we discover the spirits of our ancestors;—to hear from the tops of the mountains, amidst the roaring of the waters, their plaintive sounds, issuing from deep caverns, and the sorrowful lamentations of a maiden, who sighs and dies upon the mossy tomb of the warrior by whom she was adored! I meet this bard with silver hair, wandering in the valley; he seeks the footsteps of his fathers. Alas! he finds only their tombs! Then contemplating the pale moon, as she sinks beneath the waves of the foaming sea, the memory of time past strikes on the mind of the hero; those times when the approach of danger filled his heart with exultation, and gave vigour to his nerves—when the moon shone upon his bark, laden with the spoils of his enemies, and lighted up his triumph—when I read in his countenance his deep sorrow—when I see his

sinking glory tottering towards the grave—when he casts a look on the cold earth which is to cover him, and cries out, "The traveller will come, he who has seen my beauty will come, and he will ask, 'where is the bard? where is the illustrious son of Fingal?' he will walk over my tomb, and he will seek me in vain!" Then, then, O my friend! I could seize the sword of some true and noble knight, and rescue my prince from the tedious langour of life, and afterwards plunge it into my own breast, that I might follow the demi-god whom my hand had set at liberty.

LETTER LVIII.

Oct. 19.

Alas! the void, the fearful void, which I feel in my bosom! I frequently imagine, if I could but once, only once, just press her to my heart, I could be afterwards happy.

LETTER LIX.

Oct. 26.

I am every day more confirmed in my opinion, that the existence of any individual is of very little consequence to society. A friend of Charlotte's came just now to pay her a visit. I retired into an inner room and took up a book; but finding no inclination to read, I have taken up a pen to write to you. I at this moment hear their conversation. They are repeating the little news of the town; one is going to be married, another is ill, very ill indeed. 'She has a dry cough, and frequent faintings; it is impossible she can recover.' 'N—— is also very ill,' says Charlotte. 'He begins to swell already,'

answers the other.' My imagination carries me to their sick beds; I see them struggling with death, dreading to leave this scene of complicated misery. And these good women are talking of their dying friends with the same calm indifference as of strangers! When I look round the room in which I am sitting, when I see Charlotte's apparel lying round me; her ear-rings, Albert's papers, and various things which are familiar to me; even the ink-stand I am now using,—I reflect on what I am to this family. I am every thing—they esteem me—I am capable of contributing to their pleasure—and am exceedingly attached to them. Yet if I were now suddenly to quit this circle, how long would they be sensible of that void which my absence would occasion? How long? Alas! such is the frailty of man, that where he is most conscious of the pleasures of existence, where his presence makes a real and strong impression, even in the hearts and memory of those who are dear to him; even there his name must perish and disappear; and that—quickly!

LETTER LX.

Oct. 27.

I could tear open my breast, I could beat my head against the wall, after the disappointment of opening my soul to another who is incapable of partaking in my sensations and ideas. I cannot receive from another the love, the joy, the warmth, the pleasure, that I do not naturally possess; nor with a heart glowing with the most lively affection, can I impart to another that happiness which he is, by nature, unable to participate.

LETTER LXI.

Oct. 30.

A hundred times have I been on the point of clasping her in my arms! What torment it is to see such loveliness, such charms, passing and repassing continually before one, without daring to touch them! To touch is so natural: do not children endeavour to touch every thing they see? and I!——

LETTER LXII.

Nov. 3.

How often, when I have lain down upon my bed, have I earnestly prayed that I might never awake again! yet in the morning have opened my eyes, beheld the sun again, and again was wretched! Ah! why am I not hypochondriacal or insane? Why cannot I attribute my woes to intemperate seasons, to disappointed ambition, to the persecutions of an enemy? for then this heavy load of discontent would be less insupportable. But I feel too sensibly the origin of my unhappiness is in myself. This very bosom, which formerly contained a fund of satisfaction, is now the source of all my grief. Am I the same man who formerly experienced only agreeable sensations? who, at every step he took, saw paradise before him, and whose liberal heart glowed with universal benevolence? Alas, no!—that mind is now become torpid, and dead to every enjoyment: my eyes are dry, and my senses, no longer refreshed by soft tears, wither away, and perish, and consume my brain. My sufferings are great: I have lost the only charm

of my life; that active sacred power, which created worlds around me; it is no more. I see from my window the distant hills; the rising sun dispels the morning clouds, and gilds the opening prospect with his rays; the soft stream gently winds through the naked willows. Nature still displays all her beauties before me, exhibits the most inchanting scenes, and yet my heart is now unmoved; I remain blind, insensible, petrified. Often have I implored heaven for tears, as the labourer prays for dews to moisten his parched corn. But, I perceive it, heaven does not grant sunshine or rain to importunate intreaties. Those times, the memory of which now torments me, were comparatively happy, because I patiently endured afflictions; and, when blessed, my heart was filled with delight and gratitude.

LETTER LXIII.

Nov. 8.

Charlotte has tenderly reproved me for my excesses. For the truth is, that in order to dissipate my cares, I have, of late, where I used to drink a single glass, drank an entire bottle. 'Don't do so,' said she, 'think of Charlotte.' 'Is the advice to think of Charlotte necessary? I do think of you continually, nay, more than *think* of you; you are ever before my eyes, you are in my heart. This very morning I was sitting in the place where you stopped the last time'—— She immediately changed the subject, to prevent me from going on. My dear friend, I am no longer any thing; this amiable dear girl makes me whatever she pleases.

LETTER LXIV.

Nov. 15.

Ah! when will this waking dream of life be over? Is there no reversion in the fate of things in favour of the unfortunate? Wearied, and dejected, last night I stretched myself upon the grass, on which I fell asleep. I dreamed that Charlotte was dead, that she appeared to me, and reminded me of our attachment. Of our future condition I am uncertain, but we cannot have merited unhappiness. Of this I am however certain, that my strength is insufficient to endure the portion of calamity allotted to me. I shall at last drop under the accumulated depression of spirits which each day increases. Oh! my dear friend, may I ever regain peace of mind? What will become of me? Destined to love the wife of my friend, and yet that friendship to remain sincere!

LETTER LXV.

Nov. 21.

Charlotte does not perceive that she is preparing a poison which will destroy us both; and this deadly poison which she presents to me I swallow in large draughts. What mean those tender looks which are sometimes discoverable, that complacency with which she hears the sentiments that sometimes escape me, and the tender sympathy for my sufferings which appears in her countenance? Yesterday, when I took leave of her, she held out her hand to me, and said, 'Adieu! my dear Werter.'—*Dear* Werter!—It was the first time she had ever called

me dear; the sound sunk deep into my heart: I have since repeated it a thousand times; and, at night, when I went to bed, I said, 'Good night, *my dear Werter!*'—I recollected myself and laughed.

LETTER LXVI.

Nov. 24.

Charlotte is sensible of my sufferings. To-day her looks quite overpowered me. I found her alone—I was silent. She fixed her eyes stedfastly on me. The charms of beauty, and the fire of genius, were fled. But I saw in her countenance an expression much more touching;—the expression of the tenderest concern, and the kindest compassion. Why did I suffer the cold impression of respect to deter me from throwing myself at her feet? from folding her in my arms, and declaring my gratitude by a thousand kisses? In the interval of my confusion, she had recourse to her harpsichord, and in a low and sweet voice accompanied the melancholy sounds. Never did her lips appear so lovely; they seemed to open, just to receive the plaintive tones of the instrument and to assist the vibration with swelling harmony. I cannot express my sensations! I was overcome, and, bending down, pronounced this vow: 'Beautiful lips! which celestial spirits guard, never will I profane you.' I wish——but oh! my friend, an eternal barrier is placed between us. And yet I wish I could taste this felicity, and then die and expiate my crimes—my crimes!

LETTER LXVII.

Nov. 30.

It is past. My fate is decided. Each succeeding day brings some additional cause of distraction to add to and fill up the bitter portion of existence. Oh, destiny! oh, man! To-day, at dinner-time, finding no inclination for food, I took a walk by the river side. The country seemed deserted; the day was gloomy; a cold and damp easterly wind blew from the mountains, and black heavy clouds spread over the plain. I perceived a man at a distance in an old great coat; he was wandering amongst the rocks, and appeared to be looking for plants. When I reached him, he turned round, and I saw a countenance remarkably interesting, where a settled melancholy was predominent. His fine black hair flowed gracefully upon his shoulders. 'What are you looking for, friend?' said I. He answered, with a deep sigh, 'I am looking for flowers, and can't find any.' 'Why this is not the season for flowers,' said I. 'O yes, there are many flowers,' he said, 'I have in my garden roses and lilies of different sorts, my father gave me one of them; they grow every where; I have been looking for them these two days, and I can't find them. There are always flowers here in the fields, both yellow, blue, and red; and that centuary that grows in such pretty clusters; I cannot find any of them.' I asked him what he intended to do with these flowers. He smiled, and holding up his finger with a mysterious air, said, 'Don't now betray me; I have promised my mistress a nosegay.' 'That is very proper,' said I. 'Ah! she has every

thing,' he answered, 'she is very rich.'—'And yet,' said I, 'she is fond of your nosegays?' 'Oh! she has jewels and a crown!' he exclaimed. I enquired her name. 'If the States General would pay me,' he cried, 'I should be quite another man! Alas! there was a time when I was as happy as the day was long. But now it is all over with me, and I am'—He raised his swimming eyes to heaven.—'You were, then, *once* happy?' said I. 'Ah, would I were still the same!' said he; 'I was so happy, so gay, so contented—I was like a fish in the water.' An old woman who was coming towards us, called out, 'Henry! Henry! where are you? I have been looking every where for you; come to dinner!' 'Is that your son?' said I to her. 'Yes, my poor unfortunate son,' said she; 'the Lord has sent us this affliction.' I asked how long he had been in that state. 'It is about six months,' she answered, 'since he has been calm as he is now, and I thank Heaven for it; he was one whole year quite raving, and chained down in a mad-house; now he is not troublesome to any body, but he talks of nothing but kings and emperors. He was formerly a very good young man, and helped to maintain me; he wrote a very fine hand; but suddenly grew melancholy, was seized with a burning fever, became distracted, and is now as you see. If I were to tell you, sir'—— I interrupted her by asking, what time it was that he regretted so much, and in which he boasted of having enjoyed such perfect happiness. 'Poor boy!' said she, with a smile of compassion, 'it is the very time when he was entirely out of his senses; he continually regrets it; it was the time when he was confined and absolutely raving.' I was thunderstruck. I put some

money into her hand and went away. 'You were happy!' I exclaimed, as I walked hastily towards the town; 'you were like a fish in the water!' God of heaven! is this the destiny of man? is he only happy before he possesses his reason, and after he has lost it? Unhappy being! And yet I envy thy lot: full of hopes thou goest, even in winter! to gather flowers for thy mistress; art afflicted at thy disappointment; and canst not conceive the reason. —But, as for me, I wander without hope, without design, and return as I went. To your disordered imagination it appears, that if the States General would but pay you, you would be a man of consequence; and fortunate it is that you can attribute your sufferings to any foreign power. You do not know, you do not feel, that your wretchedness is in your agitated heart, in your disordered brain, and that all the kings and potentates upon earth cannot restore you. Let their death be without consolation who can laugh at the sick man who travels to distant springs, only to find an accumulation of disease, and a death more painful! or, that can exult over the depressed mind, which to obtain peace of conscience, and to alleviate remorse, makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Land! Every step which wrings his feet in rugged paths, is balm to his soul, and the nearer he advances to the goal of his desires, he feels himself gradually relieved from the weight which oppressed him. Will you dare to call this extravagance, you who raise yourselves upon stilts to make pompous declamations? Extravagance! O God! is not our inevitable portion of misery sufficient, without the persecution of our fellow-creatures, who whould deprive us of all consolation, and take away

our trust in thee, in thy love and mercy? The strengthening vine, the salutary herb, the healing root, come from thy hand—relief and saving health are thine. Father, whom I know not!—thou who wert wont to cheer my drooping senses, but now hidest thy face from me!—call thy wanderer back, speak to his heart! my soul is no longer able to support thy silence. What father's wrath would be excited against his son, for rushing unexpectedly into his presence, hanging on his neck, and crying out, 'Oh, my father! forgive me for having shortened my journey, and returned before the appointed time! I found the world uniformly the same. Labour and pain, pleasure and reward, abounded every where, but they were all indifferent to me. I am convinced that happiness is to be found only in thy presence, and here will I remain whatever be my fate!' And wouldst thou, heavenly and adored Father! banish such a child from thy presence?

LETTER LXVIII.

Dec. 1.

The enviable maniac I described to you, in my last, was clerk to Charlotte's father. He conceived an unfortunate passion for her; he cherished, concealed, and at length discovered it—was dismissed, and became such as I yesterday saw him. Think, if you can, what an impression these few words made on me! which Albert repeated with as much calm indifference, as perhaps you will read them.

LETTER LXIX.

Dec. 4.

I can support this state no longer. To-day I was sitting beside Charlotte; she was playing some favourite airs upon her harpsichord, with an expression it is impossible for me to describe. Her little sister was turning over her book of pictures upon my lap. Soft melancholy sensations stole on my senses. Her wedding-ring started into my sight: my spirits sunk. Immediately she began to play a divine air, which had often inchanted me. At first it afforded me consolation, but it soon recalled to my mind the times which are past.—Grief! disappointed hopes!—I rose, and traversed the room with hasty steps. At length I went up to her, exclaiming, 'For heaven's sake, play no longer!' She stopped, and looking stedfastly at me, said, with a smile that sunk deep into my heart, 'Werter, you are indeed very ill: you are disgusted with your most favourite food. Pray go and endeavour to compose yourself.' I tore myself from her. Great God! thou seest my torments, and wilt put an end to them!

LETTER LXX.

Dec. 6.

How her image haunts me! Awake or asleep she is ever present to my imagination. As soon as I retire to rest and close my weary eyelids, I find her dark eyes imprinted on my brain. Here—I do n't know how to describe it:—but those expressive orbs are ever present to my sight and absorb all my fac-

ulties. O what is man! that boasted demi-god! whose strength deserts him, even in the very moment when he should exert it all; and whether he swims in pleasure, or bends under a load of sorrow, he is compelled to stop; and, while grasping at infinity, finds only this certainty, that he must return again to his original cold existence.

LETTER LXXI.

Dec. 8.

Surely, my dear friend, I am affected in the manner of those wretches who were formerly supposed to be possessed by devils. I am often in this situation. It is not agony; it is not passion; it is a secret rage, that excites an inward agitation, and threatens me with instant suffocation. I cannot weep, but I am wretched, and feel gratified only in wandering at midnight amidst the gloomy scenes which this unfriendly season exhibits. Last night I was thus impelled to go out. I had heard that the river, and all the brooks in the neighbourhood, had overflown their banks, and that from Walheim to this place, my favourite valley, was under water. I ran out immediately, tho' it was past eleven o'clock: it was a gloomy and awful sight! the moon was behind a cloud, but a few scattered rays served to discover the foaming waves rolling over the fields and meadows, and beating against the bushes; the whole valley was as a stormy sea tossed by furious winds. The moon then appeared resting on a dark cloud; the splendor of her light increased the disorder of nature. The echoes repeated and redoubled the roarings of the wind and waters. I drew near to the precipice; I wished and

shuddered; I stretched out my arms, I leaned over, I sighed, and lost myself in the happy thought of burying all my sufferings, all my torments, in that abyss, and tossing amidst the waves. Why were my feet rooted to the earth? why could I not have terminated my miseries? I feel it, my dear friend, my hour is not yet come. With what delight should I have changed my nature, and have incorporated with the whirlwinds to rend the clouds and disturb the waters! Perhaps I may one day quit my prison and taste these pleasures. I looked down, with sorrow upon a little spot where I had sat under a willow by the side of Charlotte, after a summer's walk; which also was under water. I could scarcely distinguish the tree. Alas! I then thought of the steward's house, the adjacent fields, the walks, the green recesses, which I had so often traversed, now perhaps laid waste by the torrent: and the memory of time for ever lost entered my heart. Thus, to the sleeping captive, dreams recal all the blessings he is deprived of. I hesitated. Yet I don't reproach myself, for I have the courage to die; I should have. At present, I am like an old and decripit woman, who picks dry sticks along the hedge side, and begs bread from door to door, in order to prolong, for a few moments, a feeble and miserable existence.

LETTER LXXII.

Dec. 17.

Is not my love for her the purest and most sacred? Is it not the love of a brother for his sister? Has my heart ever formed a wish that it need blush to own? To attest this truth by oaths were needless.

Bnt now——such dreams! They were certainly in the right who attributed contending passions to external powers. Last night—I tremble as I write it—I held her in my arms, I pressed her to my bosom, and imprinted burning kisses on her trembling lips, while our eyes beamed with the most lively expressions of pleasure. Can the delight I now experience in recalling these transports be deemed a crime? Oh! Charlotte! Charlotte, my fate is decided! my mind can no longer endure this state; my senses are disordered!—for seven days I have not been myself;—my peace of mind is entirely fled;—all places are alike indifferent to me;—I ask nothing, I desire nothing, life itself is an insipid possession.—Ah! 't were better to depart!

[*The Editor to the Reader.*

In order to give a connected account of the last days of Werter, I find myself obliged to interrupt the course of his letters, by a narrative, the particulars of which were supplied by Charlotte, Albert, his own servant, and some other witnesses.

Werter's unfortunate passion had insensibly diminished the harmony which subsisted between Charlotte and her husband. The affection of Albert for his wife, was sincere, but calm, yet had, by degrees, given place to his attachment to business. He was unwilling, indeed, to own that there really did exist this material difference between the days he now passed, and those which preceded his marriage; but

he felt a settled displeasure at Werter's marked attentions to Charlotte—attentions which appeared to him an infringement on his rights, and which conveyed a tacit reproach. This idea increased a moroseness excited by the harassing nature of an employment which was full of difficulty and produced little emolument. The grief which preyed on the heart of Werter, had extinguished the fire of his genius; he had lost all his vivacity and quickness of perception; in company he was spiritless and moping. Charlotte saw him every day; observed his situation; and became also thoughtful and melancholy, which Albert attributed to a growing attachment to her lover, and Werter to the apparent change in the conduct of her husband. A want of confidence in these two friends made their society irksome to each other. Albert avoided going to his wife's apartment when he knew Werter was there; and Werter, who perceived it, after several ineffectual efforts to discontinue his visits entirely, took those opportunities of seeing her, when he knew Albert was engaged. This afforded additional subject for discontent, till at length Albert very dryly told his wife, that, were it for the sake of appearance only, she should behave differently to Werter, and not see him so often. About the same time this unhappy young man was confirmed in his resolution to quit life. His most favourite thoughts had long contemplated this design, and particularly since his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte, but he had determined not to commit such an act with rashness or precipitation; he thought it should be taken as became him, with resolution and firm conviction, yet with calmness and tranquillity. His doubts and struggles

may be seen by the following fragment, which was found, without any date among his papers, and which appears to have been the beginning of a letter to his friend.]

—Her presence, her fate, the interest she discovers for mine, have not power to drain a tear from my exhausted brain! To draw the curtain; to pass on the other side—that is all! Whence then this hesitation? whence these fears? 'Tis because we are ignorant of what is behind, and because there is no resource, no alternative. The mind is inclined to form objects of intimidation where there is uncertainty.

[His various mortifications, while he was secretary to the ambassador, had given him an entire disgust to public business and all political affairs. Dissatisfied with the world and all he had found in it, he gave way to those singular opinions which appear in these letters; and to a passion which knew no bounds, but which was destined to consume all his remaining vigour. The unalterable nature of his situation; the sadness of his intercourses with the most amiable and most beloved of women, whose peace he continually disturbed; his conflicts and struggles, and his reflections on enduring a painful existence, passed without design or end, impelled him, at length, to the resolution of terminating his life.]

LETTER LXXIII.

Dec. 20.

I thank my dear William for his friendship in having employed a word so well adapted to my ideas. Yes, it is undoubtedly better that I should quit my unmeaning station. Your proposal, however, of re-

turning to your neighbourhood, does not entirely meet my approbation: at least there is one excursion I wish to take first, particularly as one may expect a frost and good roads. Your intention of coming to fetch me affords me great pleasure; but I intreat you to defer your journey for a fortnight, and do not set out till you have received another letter from me. One should engage in nothing prematurely, and in the space of a fortnight many incidents may occur. Desire my mother to think of me in her best wishes; tell her I sincerely ask her pardon for the unhappiness I have occasioned her. It was ever my fate to create misery where I wished to have communicated joy. Adieu! my best of friends! may eternal blessings await you! Farewell!

[The day on which he wrote this letter was the Sunday preceding Christmas. He went out in the dusk of the evening to call on Charlotte, and found her alone. She was busy in preparing some playthings as a Christmas present for her brothers and sisters. He began to talk of the innocent happiness of children, and of that age when the opening of the door, and the sudden appearance of the desert, decorated with fruit and sweetmeats, and lighted up with wax-candles,* causes such transports of joy. 'You shall have a present too if you behave well,' said Charlotte, hiding her embarrassment under a smile. 'What do you call behaving well, my dear Charlotte?' said he. She answered, 'Thursday night will be Christmas eve; the children and my father

* This alludes to a custom which prevails in Germany, of concealing a tree, thus embellished, every Christmas eve, in some private place, for the purpose of agreeably surprising the children, by producing it at a time when they least expect it.

will all be here; you must come also; I have a present for each; but do not come before that time.' Werter started. 'Nay,' continued she, 'it must be so; I ask it as a favour; my own peace and tranquillity demand it; we must not go on in this manner any longer.' He turned away his face, walked, with hasty steps, up and down the room, repeatedly muttering, 'We must not go on in this manner any longer.' Charlotte seeing the violent agitation into which these words had thrown him, endeavoured, by different questions, to divert his thoughts; but her endeavours were ineffectual. 'Well, Charlotte, I will see you no more!' 'Why so, Werter? we may, we must, see each other again, only let it be with more discretion. Oh! why were you born with such an impetuous temper, with such an ungovernable passion for every thing to which you become attached?' Then, taking his hand, she said, 'Let me beg of you to be more calm; what variety of pleasure and entertainment is your fine understanding, your genius, and talents capable of supplying to yourself and others! Exert the spirit of a man, engage in the important avocations of life, and subdue an unfortunate attachment to me, who can only esteem and pity you. He bit his lips, and looked at her with a countenance dark and angry. She continued to hold his hand.—'Be cool for one moment, Werter!—Are you not sensible that you are deceiving yourself, that you are madly pursuing the means of your own destruction? Why should I be the sole object of your attachment—I, who belong to another? I fear, Werter, I much fear, that the impossibility only of possessing me renders the desire of it strong.' He withdrew his hand, and with the most severe and

discontented look, exclaimed, 'What consummate prudence! Pray, did Albert furnish you with this profound reflection?' 'It is a reflection which might very readily occur to any one,' said Charlotte: 'what! is there not in the wide world one woman who is at liberty, and who has the power to gratify the wishes of your heart? Become as before I knew you; search for such a person; and believe me when I tell you that you will certainly find her. I have long been anxiously concerned for your health and welfare. The solitude, to which you have for some time past devoted yourself, induces melancholy reflections, and every cheerful prospect is beclouded. Make an effort; a journey would tend to dissipate your gloominess. Seek and find an object worthy of your tenderness; then return, and let us mutually enjoy all the happiness which can arise from the most perfect and uninterrupted friendship.' 'That speech, my dear Charlotte,' said Werter, with marks of irritation, 'ought to be printed for the use of all pedagogues. Allow me a little time longer and all will be well.' 'But however, Werter, grant me one request,—do not come again before Christmas-eve,' she said. He was going to answer, when Albert came in. Werter and he coolly saluted each other, and then walked up and down the room with evident embarrassment. They conversed on unconnected subjects, and soon discontinued them. Albert questioned his wife concerning several trifling commissions he had given her; and finding they were not executed, made use of some harsh expressions, which pierced the soul of Werter. He wished to go, but had not power; and he remained, thus situated, till eight o'clock, during which time uneasiness of temper and

acrimony continued to increase; till the servant came to lay the cloth for supper, when he took leave, whilst Albert very coldly asked him, if he would not stay supper. Werter returned home, took the candle from the servant, and went up to his room alone. He was heard to talk with great earnestness, and walk hastily backwards and forwards, sighing with great emotion. At length, without undressing, he threw himself upon the bed, where his servant found him at eleven o'clock. He assisted Werter to take off his boots; but received orders not to come in again till he rung. In the morning of Monday, the twenty-first of December, he wrote the following letter, which was found after his death upon his bureau, and sealed. It was given to Charlotte. I shall insert it in fragments, as it appears, by several circumstances, to have been written.]

——Charlotte! I am resolved to die. This is no hasty resolution, no sudden transport of romantic rage. On the morning of that day on which I shall see you for the last time (with perfect coolness and deliberation, I acquaint you with it), ere you read these lines, dearest and best of women! a cold grave will contain the inanimate remains of that agitated unhappy man, who in the last moments of his life knew no pleasure so great as that of conversing with you. I have passed a dreadful night, or rather a propitious one, since it has dispelled my doubts and fixed my wavering resolution. When I tore myself from you yesterday, my senses were in the greatest tumult and disorder; my heart was oppressed; hope and every ray of pleasure were fled; and a petrifying cold surrounded my wretched being. I could scarcely reach my room; I threw myself upon

my knees. For the last time I felt the consolation of shedding tears. My troubled soul was agitated by a thousand ideas, a thousand different schemes! which terminated in my favourite decision—I will die. I went to bed; and, when I awoke in the morning, refreshed by the wholesome balm of sleep, still was that resolution deeply engraven on my heart,—"I will die." It is not despair, it is a conviction that the whole world can afford me no inducement to prolong my stay; it is a certainty that I have completed my career, and that this sacrifice is necessary to my tranquillity.—Yes, Charlotte, to your tranquillity—why should I conceal it? One of us three must perish—it shall be Werter. Oh! my dear Charlotte! this mind, governed by rage and fury, has conceived the horrid idea of murdering your husband—you—myself!—I must depart. When in the fine evenings of summer, you walk towards the mountains, remember how often you have seen me traverse the valley below; look towards the spot where the weary sojourner reposes; and by the beams of the setting sun, see how the evening breeze waves the high grass which grows over me.

[About ten in the morning, Werter called his servant; and, as he was dressing, told him, that in a few days he was going to take a journey, directed him to lay his clothes in order, call in his bills, fetch home some books he had lent, and give two months' pay to some poor people who were accustomed to receive a weekly allowance. He passed the morning in his room; and, after dinner, went to the steward's, whom he did not find at home. He walked pensively in the garden, and seemed desirous of recalling all the ideas which were most painful to him.

The children did not allow him to be long alone; they all went in pursuit of him; and skipping and dancing round him, told him, that after to-morrow, and to-morrow, and one day more, they were to have their Christmas-gifts from Charlotte; and described to him all the wonderful things their imaginations had formed an expectation of. "To-morrow," he repeated, "and to-morrow, and one day more!"—and he embraced them tenderly. He was going, when the youngest stopped him, to whisper in his ear, that his brothers had written very fine congratulations on the new-year—very fine, indeed, and very long,—one for Papa, and one for Albert and Charlotte, and one for Mr. Werter too; and that they were all to be presented very early in the morning on new-year's day. This last stroke overcame his fortitude. He gave something to each of the children, mounted his horse, and charging them to give his compliments to their father, left them, very much affected. He returned home about the hour of five, and ordered his servant to keep up the fire; told him to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and his clothes upon the top. He then appears to have written the following fragment of his letter to Charlotte.]

——You do not expect me. You think I shall obey you, and that I shall not see you again till Christmas-eve. Oh! Charlotte, to-day or never! On Christmas-eve you will hold this paper in your hand; and, trembling, wet it with your tears. It must be so—how well satisfied I am that my destiny is resolved!

[At half past six he went to Albert's and found Charlotte alone, who was much distressed at seeing

him. She had, in conversation with her husband, mentioned that Werter would not be there before Christmas-eve; and very soon afterwards Albert ordered his horse, and, notwithstanding the rain, set out, in order to settle some business with an agent in the neighbourhood. Charlotte knew that he had for a long time delayed this visit, which was to keep him a night from home. She felt his want of confidence and was hurt. Alone and full of sorrow, she recalled her past life, and the retrospect produced no cause of reproach. She had a sincere affection for her husband; in whom, instead of happiness, she found only causes of misery. She then thought of Werter, and blamed, but could not hate him. A secret charm had attached her to him from their earliest acquaintance; and now, after so long a friendship, after the varied scenes and changes they had experienced during that interval, he had made impressions on her mind never to be eradicated. Her depressed soul was relieved by tears, which introduced a soft melancholy, in which she was absorbed; when with great astonishment and emotion, she heard Werter below asking if she were at home? It was too late to deny herself, and she had not recovered her confusion when he came in. 'You have not kept your word,' she cried out. 'I did not promise any thing,' he answered. 'You should, however, Werter,' said Charlotte, 'have complied with my request, our mutual peace demanded it.'—She sent to some of her friends, and desired them to come and pass the evening with her; not only that they might be witnesses of the conversation, but from an intention that Werter thinking himself obliged to wait on them home, would go sooner away. He had

brought her some books; she talked of them and of some others. She introduced also other general topics of conversation, during the time of expecting her friends; but the servant presently returned with different excuses from them all. This intelligence for a few minutes disconcerted her, but the consciousness of her innocence inspired a firmness which raised her mind above the influence of Albert's suspicions. She thought of calling in her maid, which intention she discarded; and after a short recourse to her harpsichord, became perfectly composed, and went and sat beside Werter upon the sofa. 'Have you nothing to read to me, Werter?' said she. 'Nothing,' he answered. 'Open, then, that drawer,' said Charlotte, 'and you will find your own translation of some of the songs of Ossian; I have not yet read it; I have waited an opportunity of hearing you read it; but for some time past you have been fit for nothing.' He smiled, and went to fetch the manuscript; then sat down to read; and, after some time, came to that affecting passage where Armin deplores the loss of his beloved daughter.

"Alone on the sea-beat rock his daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her sighs, nor could her father afford her relief. All night I stood on the shore. I saw her by the faint light of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind, and the rain beat hard on the mountain's side. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak; it died away like the evening breeze among the grass of the rocks. Spent with grief, she expired; and left thee, Armin, alone! Gone is my strength in the war; and fallen my pride among women!

"When the storms of the mountain come, when the

north lifts the waves on high, I sit by the sounding shore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the setting moon I see the shades of my children. Half viewless they walk in mournful conference together. "Will none of you speak in pity?" They do not regard their father! I am sad, O Carmor! nor small my cause of woe!" Here a torrent of tears streamed from the eyes of Charlotte, which gave some relief to the oppression of her heart. Werter threw down the paper, and seized her hand. Charlotte leaned upon the other arm, and held her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both of them in the utmost agitation. In this unhappy story they felt their own misfortunes; and they sympathized with each other. The ardent eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted to her arm. She trembled, and made a faint effort to go from him; but sorrow and soft compassion pressed on her, and prevented her from moving. After some vain attempts to compose herself, she begged him to proceed. Werter, much exhausted, took up the manuscript, and, with a faultering voice continued.— "Why dost thou awake me, O gale! It seems to say, 'I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blast that shall scatter my leaves. To-morrow shall the traveller come: he who saw me in my beauty shall come; his eyes will search the field, but they will not find me.'" These words were so applicable to the present situation of Werter, that he felt them most forcibly. He threw himself at Charlotte's feet in a transport of despair, seized her hands, and put them to his eyes and to his forehead. A secret apprehension of his fatal design now entered the mind of Charlotte for the first time;

her senses were bewildered; she pressed his hands, pressed them to her bosom; and as she gently inclined her head towards him, with emotions of tenderness, her glowing cheek touched his. In these moments of frenzy, they were insensible to every thing but to affection for each other. He clasped her in his arms, pressed her to his heart, and imprinted a thousand burning kisses on her trembling lips. 'Werter!' she cried, in a faint voice, and turned her face from him; 'Werter!' she repeated, and, with a feeble hand, put him from her. At length, with the firm determined voice of prudence, she cried, 'Werter!' He was awed; suffered her to escape from his arms; and fell on his knees before her. Charlotte rose, and as she retired with trembling steps, said, in a voice of love blended with resentment, 'This, Werter, is the last time; you shall never see me again!' Then, casting a look of the utmost tenderness on her unhappy lover, she hastened into her own room, and locked the door. Werter extended his arms towards her, but did not dare to detain her. He continued upon the ground with his head resting upon the sofa for nearly an hour, when he was roused by the noise of the maid, who came to lay the cloth for supper. He then walked up and down the room; and as soon as he found himself alone, he went to the door of Charlotte's apartment, saying, in a low voice, 'Charlotte! Charlotte! but one word more, one last farewell!' He listened; but but she made no answer. He intreated; and listened again. Obtaining still no answer, he cried, Charlotte, farewell! farewell for ever!' and tore himself from the place. As he approached the gate of the town, the guard knew him and let him pass. The night was

dark and stormy. He reached home about eleven. His servant perceived he was without hat, but ventured not to make any enquiry. In assisting to draw off his clothes he found them all very wet. His hat was afterwards met with upon the summit of a rock, situated on the declivity of a mountain which commands an extensive prospect of the valley. It is inconceivable how he could climb so steep a place, in such a night, without falling down the precipice and being dashed to pieces. He went to bed and slept till late next day. His servant found him writing when he carried his coffee to him. He was adding what follows to Charlotte's letter.]

——For the last time I now open my eyes. They will behold the sun no more: a thick and gloomy fog hides it. Let Nature put on mourning,—her child, her friend, her lover, draws near his end! The sentiment I now feel, stands alone in my mind—it is strongly marked; and yet nothing appears to me more like a dream than when I say, This is my last day. The *last!* Charlotte, that word LAST conveys no fixed idea to my mind. To-day I stand upright, I am in full possession of my strength; to-morrow I shall lie, cold and stiff, extended upon the ground. What is death? we dream when we talk of it. I have seen many die; but such are the limits of our circumscribed understandings, that we cannot attain any clear conception of the beginning and end of our existence. At this moment I am myself; or, rather, dearest of women! I am thine. The next, separated —disunited—perhaps, for ever! No, Charlotte; no. We now exist, how then can we suffer annihilation? What does annihilation mean? this also is a mere sound, which conveys no fixed idea to my mind.

Dead! Charlotte!—buried in a dark confined corner of the cold earth! I had once a friend, who in my early days was every thing to me. She died. I followed her hearse, and stood by the side of her grave. I heard the creaking of the cords which let down her coffin. When the first shovelful of earth was thrown in, the coffin returned a hollow sound, which grew fainter and fainter, till it was entirely covered. I then threw myself upon the ground; my heart was smitten, grieved, rent; but I knew not what had happened to me, or what was to happen to me afterwards. Death! Grave! how unmeaning are such words! Oh, forgive me! forgive me! Yesterday! Alas! that moment should have been the last of my life! Then, for the first time, did my soul experience the pure sensation of unbounded joy—of joy unpolluted by doubt. Thou lovest me, Charlotte—O thou lovest me! My lips still glow with the sacred warmth imbibed from thine! Torrents of joy yet flow in upon my heart. Forgive me, my Charlotte! oh forgive me! I knew that I was dear to you; I saw it in the first animated look which you directed to me; I was convinced of it the first time you pressed my hand: yet, when I was absent from you, or when I saw Albert by your side, my doubts and fears returned. Do you recollect the flowers you sent to me, when at a disagreeable and crowded assembly you could neither speak to me, nor give me your hand? They were the pledges of affection; I passed half the night in the most pleasing reflections: but this impression grew fainter, and was at length effaced. Every thing passes away; but a whole eternity could not extinguish the memory of yesterday. She loves me! these

arms have embraced her, these lips have trembled on her's: she is mine! Yes, Charlotte, you are mine for ever! Albert is indeed what the world has made your husband; but what of that, 't is a name only which impales not wishes and affections,—these act unrestained, at will. As to love you is denominated a crime, I will punish myself for it. I have, perhaps, drank deep of its full delights. I will not stay then to endure a surfeit. From this moment, you are mine—yes, Charlotte, you are my own. I go but a little time before you, to my father, to your father; at the foot of whose throne I will carry my sorrows, and receive consolation till you arrive. Then will I fly to meet and claim you, and remain with you for ever. "We shall still exist, we shall find each other out, we shall know each other again," we shall see each other—*hereafter!* I shall see your respected mother, and shew to her my heart.—Your mother! your image!

[About eleven o'clock Werter asked his servant whether Albert was returned. He told him he was, for he had seen him ride by. On which Werter gave him the following note, unsealed, and ordered him to carry it to Albert's house.

'I am going to take a journey. Be so good as to lend me your pistols. Adieu!'

Charlotte had passed the night in great agitation and distress; her heart was torn by a thousand different sensations. The ardour of Werter's passionate embraces, had, in spite of every other consideration, left deep impressions in her breast. At the same time she contrasted, with regret, the days of her innocence and tranquillity, which appeared to her with new charms. She dreaded the looks of her husband,

and the pointed irony of his questions, when he should hear of Werter's visit. She had not learnt to dissemble; no falsehood had ever passed her lips; but she now found the necessity, at least, of equivocation. The repugnance and distress she felt, made her fault appear of magnitude; and yet she could neither hate the author of it, nor resolve to see him no more. Melancholy and languid, she was scarcely dressed when her husband came in. His presence was, for the first time, unwelcome to her. She trembled lest he should perceive she had been weeping, and had had no sleep; and the anxiety she experienced on this account increased her embarrassment. She received him with a kind of eagerness, which rather betrayed remorse and confusion, than expressed any real satisfaction. Albert perceived it; and, after opening some letters and packets, which had arrived in his absence, he dryly asked her, whether there were any news, and by whom she had been visited. After some hesitation she answered, 'Werter called yesterday, and spent an hour with me.' 'He chuses his time well,' said Albert; and went into his room. Charlotte remained alone for a quarter of an hour. The presence of a man whom she esteemed and loved, gave a new turn to her thoughts. The native integrity and goodness of his heart, his generous disposition, and his attachment to her, all recurred to her mind, and she reproached herself for having so ill requited him. An involuntary impulse prompted her to follow him. When she entered the room she asked if he wanted any thing? He answered 'No,' and began to write. She took a chair, and sat down to work, as usual. Albert frequently rose from his seat, to walk up and down the room,

scarcely taking any notice of the discourse which Charlotte addressed to him. This behaviour was rendered more painful, by her endeavours to hide the concern she felt from it, and to restrain the tears which were every moment ready to flow. They had passed an hour in this irksome situation, when the arrival of Werter's servant completed her misery. As soon as Albert had read the note, he turned coldly to his wife, and said, 'Give him the pistols; I wish him a good journey.' To Charlotte, these words were a thunder-stroke. She rose from her seat. With a slow, feeble, tottering pace, she walked to the wall; with trembling hands, took down the pistols, and, hesitatingly, wiped off the dust. She would have made still more delay if Albert had not asked, with a significant look, what she was waiting for? She then delivered the fatal arms to the servant, without being able to speak a single word; folded up her work, and went directly to her room, overcome with mortal grief, and foreboding dreadful calamities. Sometimes she was on the point of returning to her husband, to throw herself at his feet, acquaint him with every circumstance of the preceding evening, confess her fault, and disclose her apprehensions. She thought, for a moment, that she might persuade him to go to Werter. Soon, however, the advantage to be derived from the adoption of such a measure disappeared, and she saw nothing but its inconveniences. At length, the cloth was laid; and a friend of Charlotte's, who had called, being prevailed on to stay dinner, helped to support the conversation. When Werter heard that Charlotte had given the pistols to his servant with her own hands, he received them with transport. Hav-

ing ordered some bread and wine to be brought, he sent his servant to dinner, and began to write.]

To Charlotte in continuation.

——They have been in your hands; you wiped the dust from them. I give them a thousand kisses, for you have touched them. Ah! heaven approves and favours my design! My servant tells me, you trembled as you gave him the pistols; but did not bid me one farewell! Wretched! wretched, that I am!—not *one* farewell! Can your heart be shut against me in that hour which unites me to you for ever! Oh, Charlotte! ages cannot obliterate the impression; and it is impossible you can hate the man who loves you thus passionately.

[After dinner he told his servant to pack up every thing; tore a great number of papers; and went out to discharge some trifling debts. He returned home, then went out again, notwithstanding the rain, first to the Count's garden, and then farther into the country. He returned, when night came on, and began to write.]

——My dear friend! I have, for the last time, beheld the fields, the mountains, the forest, and the sky.—Farewell! My dearest mother, forgive me! Pardon your unhappy son! My friend, console her griefs. My affairs are all arranged. Farewell! we shall meet again, we shall meet when we are more happy.

——I have ill requited your friendship, Albert; but you will forgive me. I have disturbed the tranquillity of your family, and occasioned a want of confidence between you. Farewell! I am going to put an end to all this. May my death remove every

obstacle to your happiness! Albert, make that charmer happy; and may the benediction of heaven be on you!

[He was much occupied among his papers, during the whole evening, many of which he tore and burnt, others he sealed up and directed to his friend. They contained loose thoughts and maxims, some of which I have seen. About ten he ordered his fire to be made up, and a pint of wine to be brought, and then dismissed his servant; who, with the rest of the family, slept in a distant part of the house. The servant laid down in his clothes, that he might be ready at a moment's warning, his master having told him that the post-horses were ordered to be at the door before the hour of six.]

To Charlotte in continuation.

Past eleven.

——All is silent around me, and my soul is calm! I render thanks to thee, O God! that thou grantest me, in these last moments, warmth and vigour.

I have just been looking out at the window, and through clouds which were driven rapidly along, I perceived a few stars. Celestial bodies! you will not fall: the Eternal supports both you and me! I also saw the greater Bear—favourite of constellations! When I quitted you in an evening, it shone opposite your door. How often have I contemplated it with rapture! how often raised my hands towards it, and made it a witness of my happiness! Oh Charlotte! what is there which does not recal you to my recollection? Do you not surround me on all sides? and have I not, with childish fondness, collected together every thing which was yours? Your profile,

which was so dear to me, I return to you, Charlotte; and I conjure you to honour it. Thousands of kisses have I imprinted on it, and never have I quitted or entered my apartment without addressing myself to it. I have written to your father, desiring him to protect my remains. At the corner of the church-yard, adjoining to the fields, there are two lime-trees: it is there I wish to rest: this is in your father's power, and I know he will do it for his friend. Join your intreaties to mine. Perhaps pious Christians will not chuse that their bodies should be interred near the corpse of an unhappy wretch like me. Ah! let it then be laid in some remote valley; or by the side of the highway, that the priest and the levite, when they pass my tomb, may lift their eyes to heaven, and render thanks to the Lord, whilst the Samaritan will give a tear to my fate. Charlotte! I hold with a firm hand the fatal instrument of death. All the remaining wishes and hopes of my life will now be fulfilled. Why, Charlotte, was the satisfaction denied me of dying for you, of sacrificing myself for you? Could I restore peace and happiness to your bosom, with what joy, with what rapture, should I meet my fate! But to a chosen few only is allotted the privilege of shedding their blood for those who are dear to them, and by that means augmenting their happiness. I wish, Charlotte, to be buried in the clothes I now wear. You have touched them. They are sacred. I have also requested this favour of your father. My soul hovers over the grave. My pockets are not to be searched. The knot of pink ribband, which you wore on your bosom the first time I saw you, surrounded by the children—(Dear children!

I think I see them playing round you; give to each of them a kiss for me, and tell them the fate of their unhappy friend. At that moment how powerfully was I attached to you! how unable ever since to loosen myself from you!)—This knot of ribband is to be buried with me; you presented it to me on my birthday. With what joy did I receive it! How little was I aware of consequences! Let me intreat you, be at peace! They are loaded—the clock strikes twelve—I go—Charlotte, farewell! farewell!

[One of the neighbours saw the flash, and heard the report of the pistol; but as perfect silence succeeded he took no further notice. At six in the morning, Werter's servant went into the room with a candle. He found his master stretched upon the floor and weltering in his blood. He took him up in his arms and spoke to him, but received no answer. Some symptoms of life still appearing, the servant ran to fetch a surgeon, and then went to Albert's. When Charlotte heard the bell ring, she shuddered with horror: she waked her husband and they both arose. The servant, in tears, imparted the dreadful tidings. Charlotte fell senseless at Albert's feet.

When the surgeon arrived, the unfortunate Werter was still lying upon the floor. His pulse continued to beat; but having shot himself through the right eye, the ball had pierced his brain. A vein was opened in his arm; he bled and continued to breathe. It was supposed, from the blood round the chair, that he had committed this rash action, as he was sitting at his bureau; and that he afterwards fell upon the floor. He was found lying upon his back near the window. He was dressed in a blue frock and buff waistcoat, and had boots on. Every body in

the house, and from all parts of the town flocked to see him. Albert came in: Werter was laid upon his bed, his head was bound up, and the paleness of death rested upon his countenance. His limbs were motionless, yet some indications of life remained; but every moment was expected to expire. He had drank only one glass of the wine. "Emilia Galotti" was lying open upon his bureau. I will say nothing of Albert's deep distress, nor of the situation of Charlotte. As soon as the old steward heard of this dreadful event, he hurried to the house: he embraced his dying friend, and wept bitterly. His sons followed him on foot; they threw themselves upon their knees, at the side of Werter's bed, and kissed his hands and face in agonies of grief. The eldest, who had been his favourite, held him in his arms till he expired, and he was even then taken away by force. At twelve Werter breathed his last. The presence and authority of the steward prevented any disorder among the populace during the next day, and about the hour of eleven at night the body of Werter was deposited in the place which he had himself chosen. The steward and his sons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to attend. Charlotte's life was despaired of. The body was carried by labourers, and no priest attended.]

A FRAGMENT OF CHARLOTTE'S.

——Oh! Harriot, when I recollect the many happy hours I have spent in my native village, when I

wandered with you in the valley below our garden, and beheld the sun rising in all its splendor; when I listened to the cheerful birds, whose warblings inspired me with pleasure, while love was a stranger to my breast, I feel more sensibly my present anguish, and pity the misfortunes of Werter. His image is ever present to my imagination, and seems to remind me of his love and tenderness to me; even gratitude would have caused me to return his passion, had I not been the wife of Albert. When the damp dew descends upon the earth, and the north wind blows cold across the plain, I wander to his grave, and shed a tear to his memory. Gentle Werter! thou wast born to be unhappy, to nourish a fruitless passion for the miserable

CHARLOTTE.

"Lady's Magazine."